

# MODERN LAW ENFORCEMENT WEAPONS & TACTICS

By  
Wiley M.  
Clapp



**THE LATEST  
IN GUNS,  
EQUIPMENT  
AND TECH-  
NIQUES:**

- Handguns, Shotguns, Rifles, Automatic Weapons
- Special Situation Equipment
- Ammunition, Holsters, Restraints
- SWAT, Horse, Canine Procedures



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Wiley Clapp grew up in Southern California in the days when you could shoot a .22 rifle out in the orange groves. He was shooting a Colt Ace .22 with his father before he left the first grade. After graduation from college at the Virginia Military Institute, he entered the U.S. Marine Corps. His service there included duty as a survival instructor in the California Sierras and an extended tour as a rifle company commander in the Seventh Marine Regiment in Vietnam.

In writing this book, he draws on the experience gained from service with the Orange County Sheriff's Department from 1969 until last year, when he retired. Throughout the law enforcement and military careers, he was an active competitor in several types of handgun competition: NRA Outdoor and Gallery, Police Combat and International Silhouette. He's also an avid experimenter and handloader, with several successful wildcat cartridges to his credit.

Wiley is currently the Assistant Managing Editor of *Gun World* magazine in Capistrano Beach, California. This is his second DBI book; he co-authored the well-accepted *Book of 9mm Handguns* with Dean Grennell in 1986.

While his interest in firearms is generally broad, he is primarily intrigued with the one-handed gun, the pistol. In this work, he's able to focus that interest on law enforcement firearms in general and police handguns in particular.

(The photo on the inside back cover is of the author's pet law enforcement weapons. The photo is a Grennell original.)



# **MODERN LAW ENFORCEMENT WEAPONS & TACTICS**

**By  
WILEY M. CLAPP**

**With:  
Joe Boyd  
Roger Combs  
Tom Ferguson  
Chuck Karwan  
Jack Lewis  
Mark Lonsdale  
Christopher Weare**

**DBI BOOKS, INC.**

## ABOUT OUR COVER

Colt's 10mm Delta Elite is the centerpiece of our cover. And well it should be. On the drawing boards for several years, the big 10mm Delta Elite was the "rumor" gun everyone wanted to know more about.

Announced at the 1987 SHOT Show, the new Colt 10mm will be filling a rather embarrassing gap left by the Bren 10. Proponents of "bigger is better" will probably smile warmly on Colt's new offering.

Go back to our front cover and take a second look. The Commander hammer, rubber grips and combat sighting system are all standard.

The HK 9mm carbine is courtesy of Edward J. Emering. Badge courtesy of Harris Kinser.

Photo by John Hanusin.

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**A**S THESE words are written, on a Saturday afternoon in February of 1987, the one person to whom I owe the greatest debt in regards to this book is busy down the hall. She is Denise Comiskey, a totally delightful young lady who is suffering through her first DBI book as a production supervisor. Denise is the person to whom the galleys of typeset copy and stacks of photographs are directed. From them, she somehow makes a book. I think that you'll have to agree that it came out looking just fine. And she does it with unflinching good cheer and unending enthusiasm. Besides that, she has red hair.

She had plenty of assistance from the other folks in the Gallant/Charger art department. Her boss, Sonya Kaiser, directs the whole shootin' match and was lots of help. So were the other people, artists Paul Graff and Gary Duck. They are a talented crew of young people who can do a lot to make an author look better. You can't ignore the other folks in the production chain — Shelby Pooler and Pepper Federici in typesetting and Kelley Grant in the darkroom.

Speaking of film, lots of it was developed and printed by Russ Thurman, an exceptionally skilled combat photographer who has counseled me unendingly on how to shoot good photos. And I couldn't leave the subject of photography without mentioning John Hanusin who does those gorgeous DBI covers. Still, most of the photos in the book are mine and they stand in sharp contrast to the minority, which are Dean Grennell's. If you see a gun photo in this book which is in razor-sharp focus from butt to muzzle and which almost invites you to pick the gun off of the page, it's probably Dean's. (Damn, I wish I could do 'em that way!)

Where words are concerned, Jack Lewis is familiar with most of them and better yet, knows how they should be arranged to make sense. He edited every page of this book, taking copy from all of the authors and gently nudging it into a state of comprehensibility. In similar vein, Sheldon Factor and Harold Murtz checked for goofs back at DBI in Illinois. If you don't believe that's a pain in the butt job, try it sometime.

The gun industry itself was helpful. Particular thanks due to: Bob Platkin and Beth Mehmehl at Colt, John Nassif at Ruger, Mike Shypula at Smith & Wesson, John Falk at Winchester, Bill Siems at Federal, Dick Dietz at Remington, Paul Thompson at Browning, Alan Mossberg at Mossberg, Bob Valentine and Rich Turner at SIGArms, Neal Perkins at Safariland, Richard Nichols at Bianchi and a host of other people. I also must mention my new friend, Harvard Pennington, who rescued Chapters One and Four from the electronic maw of this machine, when the machine refused to relinquish them on one frantic Saturday afternoon.

Help came from police agencies, too. Sergeant Mike Gonzales of the Montebello Police Department helped a lot; so did Frank Nagle at Huntington Beach. I'm particularly indebted to Dennis Scott of Santa Ana, who spent a lengthy

photo session illuminating the sniper's role. The saying goes that you can do almost anything "...with the help of God and a few Marines." My personal favorites where Marines are concerned are the troops of the Military Police Dog Section at the base at MCAS, El Toro. Their dogs are law enforcement officers in their own right.

My fellow authors are a diverse lot, but universally skilled in one form of law enforcement activity or another. Roger Combs spent twenty years in the Marine Corps and currently works as an editor for Gallant/Charger publications. He has become a nationally recognized authority on holsters. Tom Ferguson is law enforcement editor of Gun World magazine and a man who speaks from the standpoint of a lengthy career at San Antonio Police Department. Chuck Karwan is a West Pointer with service in the Army's Green Berets and an unflinching curiosity about everything that burns gunpowder. Jack Lewis is the boss, but also an accepted authority on the American horse. He had fun doing the chapter on horses in law enforcement. Mark Lonsdale is a New Zealander who specializes in teaching police snipers and developing sniper equipment. And last, but not least, are my pals from the Orange County Sheriff's Department, Joe Boyd and Chris Weare, who put more than a couple of chapters each into this thing. They were the prime movers in arranging and evaluating all sorts of different stuff.

To all of these people, I give my thanks.

And there is yet another group that I'd mention. They are the dozens of good cops from all the agencies with whom I worked over the time I was active in law enforcement. I can't mention them all, but I can't shut up without naming Sam Spencer and Dave Mann, who were my first partners in patrol; Ron Finch, whom I visit in Nevada every Fourth of July; Rick Long, late of the Courthouse Dungeon; Jerry Pierson, the eminent politician-policeman; Deanna Hopkins and Ken Carter for their profound understanding; Hal Hobel, the craftsman who would do anything for someone he liked; Sid Curry, who had gunpowder in his genetic makeup; and Bert Muench, the best sergeant who never wore stripes.

...and the unnamed California Highway Patrolman who damned near wrecked a new Dodge patrol car driving 130 miles an hour down the center divider of the Riverside freeway one Easter Sunday afternoon — because I was yelling for help.

And finally my pal Chris, with whom I rode many thousands of miles up and down California, hauling the bad guys. Thanks to all of you.

\*\*\*\*\*

With tongue in cheek, let's dedicate the book... "to the great breed of American Police Administrator, in the hopes that one day there will be a blinding flash of light which gives each and every one of them total recall — therefore enabling them to remember what it's like being a cop."



*By Way Of An*

# INTRODUCTION —



**W**AR STORIES are great ways to introduce and emphasize your point. It adds credence to the message, if it can be delivered with a personal "...Sam and I knew we'd jail Whip Clayton before the night was over." In a book about police guns and police tactics, it would be really nifty if I could tell you about one blazing shootout after another, desperate life-or-death struggles, ones where I have prevailed personally.

The plain truth is that there weren't any. I was a deputy sheriff for the best part of two decades and never fired a single shot in anger. Oh, that doesn't mean that I didn't have the old shooter out on lots of occasions; I just never had to fire. I can't say that I am sorry.

But through it all, I was an active competitor in several handgun sports, a handloader and an experimenter. From an early age, I've been avidly interested in firearms and particularly the handgun. That fact in no small way caused me to choose a law enforcement career when I left the Marine Corps. I always attempted to be objective about police weapons matters and I'm satisfied that I have picked up more than the average guy in the course of my inquiries. I hope that you, the reader, will get something out of it. While I struggle for objectivity in the text of the book, I'm going to slip a few opinions into this introduction.

Police work has changed enormously since January 17, 1969. We had some tumultuous times back then. Mostly, they centered around criminal activity arising from the

frustrations of the Civil Rights Movement and public protest to the Vietnam War. We were quite riot-oriented in Southern California.

Unquestionably, the widened — and widening — use of dope in one ugly form or another has changed a lot of emphasis in law enforcement. Narcotics are now so widespread that what used to put people in jail isn't hardly worth a citation. While I applaud the greater public awareness of the narcotics problem and the educational programs that follow, I also believe that we had better control dope or it will destroy us. The profits are so enormous dealers will — and do — fight battles to protect their investments. Profits like that enable the major dealers to hire the best in the way of attorneys; all of the battles aren't on the street.

Police work is more dangerous today than it ever was. If it weren't so dangerous, why are we wearing those incredible vests every shift? Sweating through a summertime day shift in a Kevlar Kimono is not my idea of fun. For all kinds of good reason, everyone wears them. And no, there is no

mention of vests anywhere else in this book. I don't believe in discussing them in print beyond this point.

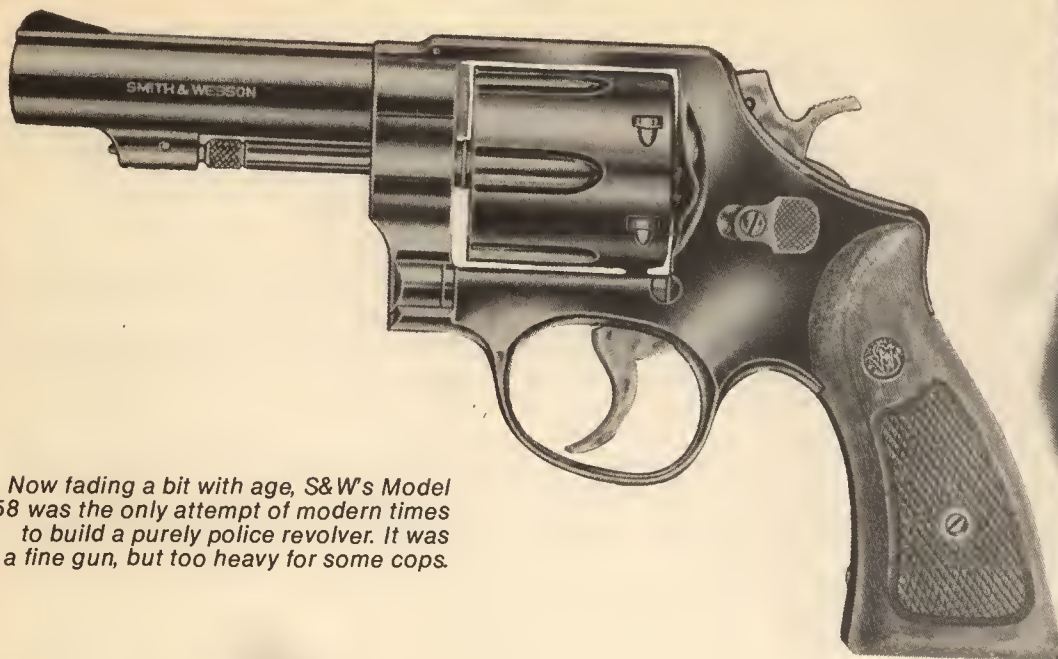
Other things change, also. Height and sex discrimination are gone, for the better I think. There are lots of smart, tough cops out there who are less than five-eight. When I started, policewomen were called "matrons" (they *hated* that term) and relegated to the jail. But I can tell you that one of the better partners I ever had was one Deanna Hopkins, who saved me from injury — both career and personal — on more than a few occasions. In all honesty, however, I think that female patrol officers, in general, suffer from the concept that a certain percentage of the patrol force *must* be female.

The changes and the dangers are real. The people who design our equipment have generally done a good job, but there are some things that we still need. Some of those are in the field of weapons. In just the last few years, we've seen new revolvers from all three of the major makers. They are good guns, ones that will serve us well into the next century.



*There are new guns from all of the major makers and this is one of the best. It's a Ruger GP-100 and will carry the Ruger police gun banner for years to come. The GP-100 has a host of new features that favor the professional user of revolvers. The one characteristic that stands out above all others is massive strength.*





*Now fading a bit with age, S&W's Model 58 was the only attempt of modern times to build a purely police revolver. It was a fine gun, but too heavy for some cops.*

If anything could be done to improve the revolver, it would have to be what the .41 magnum cartridge was intended to do way back in the 1960s. The idea was a police cartridge intermediate in size between the .38s/.357s and the .44s/.45s. We got the intermediate cartridge all right, but the gun was the S&W Model 58, a revolver too large to be handled by a lot of cops. I would have loved to have used one, but my department held to the .38 Special round.

There's still plenty of room for a medium-sized cartridge in revolvers. The ballistics of the 10mm Auto cartridge are ideal and it looks like the GP-100, King Cobra or Smith L frame would handle it. My pal, Chuck Karwan, is absolutely correct in his assessment of this situation. I doubt if we'll ever see a 10mm Auto revolver (10mm Auto Rim?) but the idea is an engaging one. What's more likely to happen is the current medium-to-heavy revolvers carrying us into the Twenty-First Century.

Why not? Despite the firepower hoopla about automatics, revolvers are still with us. They work, damn it; they are like piston engines in a turbine age. The mechanism may be fundamentally archaic, but until the advantages of something better are *overwhelmingly* better, we'll stay with the familiar. Speedloaders help close the "firepower gap" that we hear so much about. And the basic reason that the revolver hangs on is simply that it is so simple. In a modern double-action revolver, pull the trigger and the gun fires. There are no switches, levers, dials or catches to manipulate. They aren't there because there is no need for them;

you can kick the gun around like a hockey puck and it won't fire. Pull the trigger and it will.

My personal 'druthers in a super wheelgun would be a combination of features found in two of the best Smith & Wessons ever built. Combine the hammerless grip-safety mechanism of the Model 40 Smith with a cartridge akin to the Model 58's .41 maggie in a frame the size of S&W Model 681. Add the smooth grips of a GP-100 Ruger and the full-length underlug of a Colt King Cobra. Make it in stainless steel and leave off adjustable sights. Instead, give me a snap-in front sight system. My chances of getting this revolver are about as good as my chances of getting a date with Ann Margret, but what the hell! What's life without a dream?

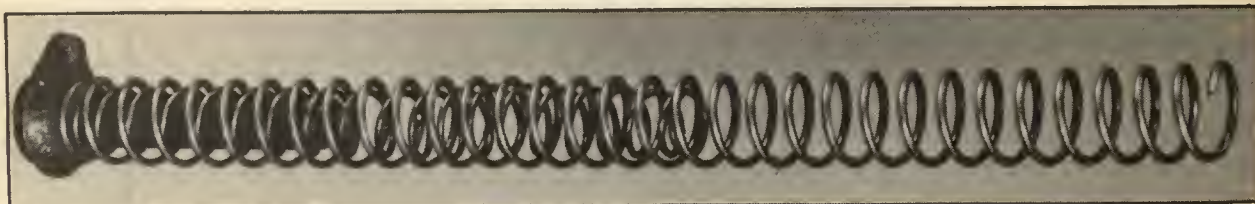
A few years ago, I would have fought a police administrator who wanted to make me carry an automatic. Now I'm not so sure. Automatic pistols have improved so drastically in the last decade that most of my old arguments against them are getting a little shaky. With good ammunition and proper maintenance, the modern automatic pistol is a reliable gun. Once in a while, they will still jam, but malfunctions are way down. Part of this is because we have learned to make ammunition that will feed reliably; part of it is because we are using new and improved guns, automatics that were engineered from scratch to use the performance ammo that's now available. It's kind of a "which-is-first, the-chicken-or-egg?" situation.

I'm not the only police officer who ever wanted a mid-sized cartridge for a duty gun. The most that came from this





Colt approached the mid-bore market in 1986 with the Delta Elite, an updated Government Model chambered for the 10mm Auto cartridge. A truly modern round, it works at higher pressures and Colt had to make some changes. Bottom view is of the double-braided recoil spring and its buffered guide. Below, left, the Delta Elite field-stripped looks a lot like the grand old .45. Below, right, ammo is made by Norma with 170- and 200-grain bullets.



is the .41 magnum, but there's now a chance that a new cartridge might break into police work. The Bren Ten was a good automatic pistol that suffered in popularity because of the manufacturer. The gun may be dead, but the cartridge lives on. Colt has introduced the venerable Government model in 10mm Auto.

Called the Delta Elite, the new Colt looks remarkably like the old. Essentially, the gun is a somewhat revised ver-

sion of the auto we've carried into war since 1911. Since the 10mm cartridge operates at a high pressure level, the slide tends to move at greater speed. To deal with this problem, Colt has gone to a double-braided recoil spring and a form of buffer on the recoil spring. Unfortunately, the specimen that you see here was not one that we could fire and I can't tell you how it handles.

But it should be a winner. The 10mm Auto round puts



out a 200-grain bullet of .400-inch diameter at about 1150 feet per second. The velocity data was derived from my own observation of the chronograph while firing a Bren Ten with a five-inch barrel. I doubt that the Colt will produce much in the way of different results.

The round compares well with the .45 ACP. The bullet is thirty grains lighter than the .45 hardball, but travels three hundred feet per second faster. This has to be an improvement over the 9mmP, which is typically loaded with a 115-grain bullet at the same velocity — about 1150 feet per second. One of the other advantages of the 10mm round is the fact that it may be loaded into a staggered column magazine and be nearly as compact as typical 9mmP guns. In the Colt, the straight magazine holds as many as the .45s — seven shots.

*Left: This little number may challenge the 10mm Auto. It's the .41 Action Express, a cartridge intended for a modern automatic pistol. Impressive performance with few problems, we'll hear more about this one. Below: Survival shooting training needs to be conducted with principles in mind. Bill Jordan's twenty-year-old book is still the best thing ever written by anyone, at any time, and in any place. This is a truly "classic" work.*





The fact that a manufacturer of the stature of Colt has decided to produce a pistol in the 10mm caliber gives a sort of *imprimatur* of approval to the round. It is only a matter of time until other makers are also producing guns in this caliber. Currently, only Norma makes 10mm ammunition, but that will also change.

It would seem then, that a mid-bore automatic pistol round will soon be a reality. If it isn't a 10mm, it might be in another new auto pistol, one that is so new that I haven't seen a pistol chambered for it. The cartridge is the .41 Action Express. It is a product of Action Arms of Pennsylvania, a company with close ties to Israel Military Industries.

The .41 AE is unique in several ways. First it has a head with the dimensions of the 9mmP. The case is longer than a 9mmP by a small amount, but the diameter of the bullet is .410-inch. This is the same as the .41 magnum and the first rounds were loaded with 170-grain .41 magnum bullets. To the manufacturer who wishes to tool up his existing 9mmP pistol to fire the new round, all that's necessary is a new barrel. Existing double-column magazines work with minor alterations. I am personally aware of at least four major companies who are looking hard at the .41 AE.

There's a good bit of interest in the weapons training

aspect of things and that is fine. Police departments would like to see shooting done by shooting specialists. That's not such a bad idea — if you were always able to compile the crooks in one spot, until the door-kickers in the black uniforms arrive. You can't, of course, so we'll continue to have to train in survival shooting for everyone.

Training has to be guided. That means that someone needs to look at what actually is being taught and why. I go into some detail in the Shooting for Survival chapter. If you want to read more on the subject, the place to start is with Bill Jordan's classic book, *No Second Place Winner*. It might be the place to end, also. There's nothing better ever written on the subject.

When you make a few bucks writing about guns, it's only a matter of time before someone asks the question, "What's the best handgun that a cop can have?" I wouldn't touch that one with a ten-foot pole.

But I can tell you for a fact that, if they insisted that I haul my sorry old bones back into uniform tomorrow and let me choose my handgun from what's currently available — well, I'd pause for a long time over a Ruger GP-100 and probably end up with a Smith & Wesson 681.

But I don't have to — I'm 10-7, out of service. You guys be careful! — *Wiley M. Clapp*



*I'll concede that there are lots of superb automatics on the market and that I'd be willing to use something as good as the SIG-Sauer 226 or S&W M645. But given a choice, I'll stay with the familiar and take a modern, high-quality double-action revolver. It would be hard to choose between the GP-100 and the Smith & Wesson Model 581. Crowded hard, I'd have to take the S&W. WMC*





## CHAPTER ONE

*Other Guns Try, But It's Fighting An Uphill Battle Trying To Separate...*



*The Shadowy handgun above is one that was made for use by American policemen. It's a Smith & Wesson M58 and it didn't persist in police use. A round of SWC ammo to the left stands as mute testimony to what remains a perennial favorite in police handguns — the .38 Special.*

**H**ORROR STORIES are rife in law enforcement. Among cops themselves, the stories are typically repeated with the kind of sardonic black humor that has made ex-cop Joe Wambaugh a best-selling author. One of the stories that still draws a chuckle and sometimes a chilly shiver down the spine of the working cop concerns the old-timer at inspection.

The story goes that, when the sergeant checked the ammo pouches on an old-time harness bull, he found the ammo corroded and green with verdigris. When the horrified three-striper looked at the veteran's gun, he had to pound the six rounds out of the cylinder, because the corrosion was a quarter-inch thick. When queried as to why he

was so grossly neglectful of an item that could possibly save his life, the veteran is said to have blithely replied: "Oh hell, I just carry the thing for show. I'm not going to have to shoot anyone!"

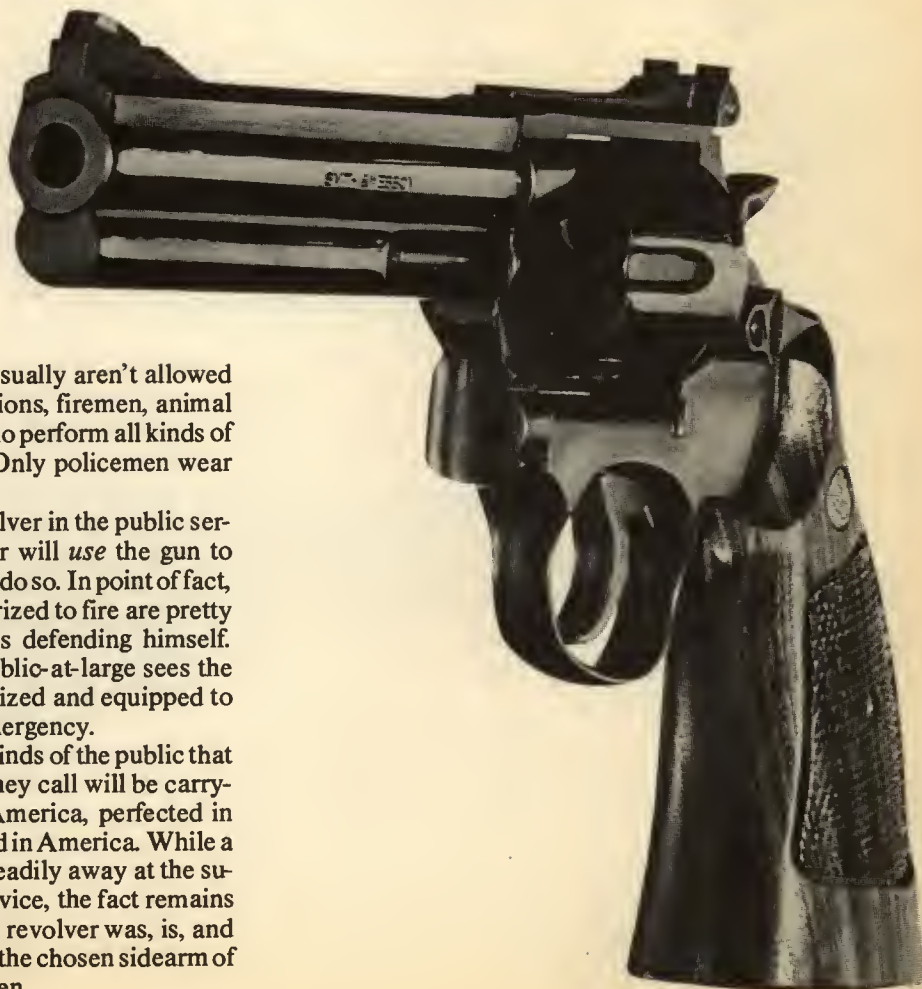
Sure, his logic is a little shaky, but you'd be forced to agree that he had historical precedent for that point of view. After all, the old-timer and countless others like him had served long and well without ever firing a shot. Many officers of a few decades ago seldom removed their revolvers from the holsters in actual street situations. Any cop of any era is a damned fool for neglecting his firearm, but it used to happen.

To a greater degree than the badge, the revolver is the symbol of police authority. Security guards wear badges to



*Maybe more than the badge, the revolver has long been a symbol of police authority. Since the policeman has worn his gun in the open, .38 revolvers have served as his ever-present defensive tool: The S&W Outdoorsman.*

*The newer Smith & Wessons, such as this Model 586, are durable guns with many features evolved from those years of experience. The basic action of all current Smiths dates to the last century — and it still works.*

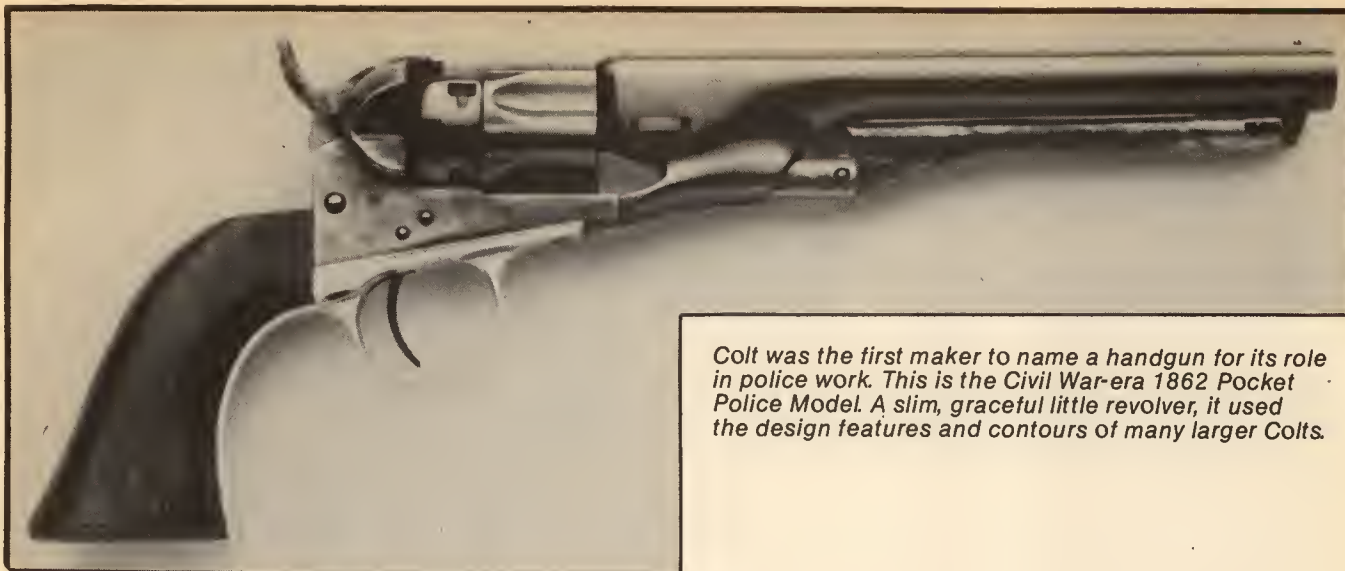


symbolize their authority, but they usually aren't allowed to carry a revolver. In some jurisdictions, firemen, animal control officers and other officials who perform all kinds of necessary work are given a badge. Only policemen wear a gun.

The implication of carrying a revolver in the public service is simply that the police officer will *use* the gun to enforce the law, if and when forced to do so. In point of fact, the times when a policeman is authorized to fire are pretty well limited to situations when he's defending himself. This in no way alters the fact the public-at-large sees the policeman as the man who is authorized and equipped to defend them in a life-threatening emergency.

And it also is quite certain in the minds of the public that the revolver is what the policeman they call will be carrying. The revolver was invented in America, perfected in America, and almost universally used in America. While a host of fine automatic pistols chip steadily away at the supremacy of the revolver in police service, the fact remains that most cops carry wheelguns. The revolver was, is, and shows every sign of continuing to be, the chosen sidearm of the majority of the nation's policemen.





*Colt was the first maker to name a handgun for its role in police work. This is the Civil War-era 1862 Pocket Police Model. A slim, graceful little revolver, it used the design features and contours of many larger Colts.*

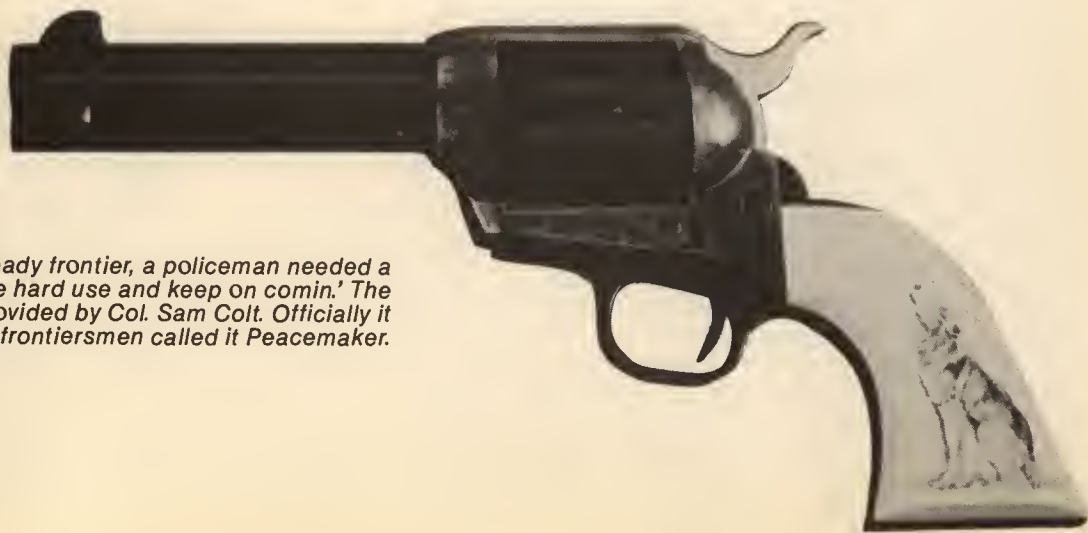
There are good reasons for this. The revolver was the chosen gun, because it got a running headstart of nearly a century over the automatic pistol. It is the chosen gun, because there are so many accurate and reliable revolvers on the market and because so much of established training favors them. It will continue to be the favorite gun, because there are new revolvers from all three of the major manufacturers. To understand the entire story of the police revolver, we'll have to look at all of these factors: past, present and future.

The revolver was invented and perfected as a practical firearm in the United States. Sam Colt was the design and marketing genius behind the first revolvers, the famous five-shot Pattersons made at the company's New Jersey plant. In time — and after weathering some financial crises that temporarily shut him down — Colt moved his plant to Connecticut. From that Hartford location, the Colt firm has produced an unending stream of fine revolvers that continue to the present day. Only a few years after the move to Hartford, the company was making revolvers specifically identified with the law enforcement market.

Before there were cartridges, there were Colt cop guns. It began with the 1862 Police Model, a cap-and-ball revolver with slim, graceful lines that some authorities have called a Civil War Detective Special. While the Colt company was concerned mostly with producing military and frontiersman's handguns from the Civil War until the turn of the century, they did make some purely police revolvers. One of these is the New Police Model of 1882, a pocket-sized revolver that featured hard-rubber grips with a Cop-and-Thug motif.

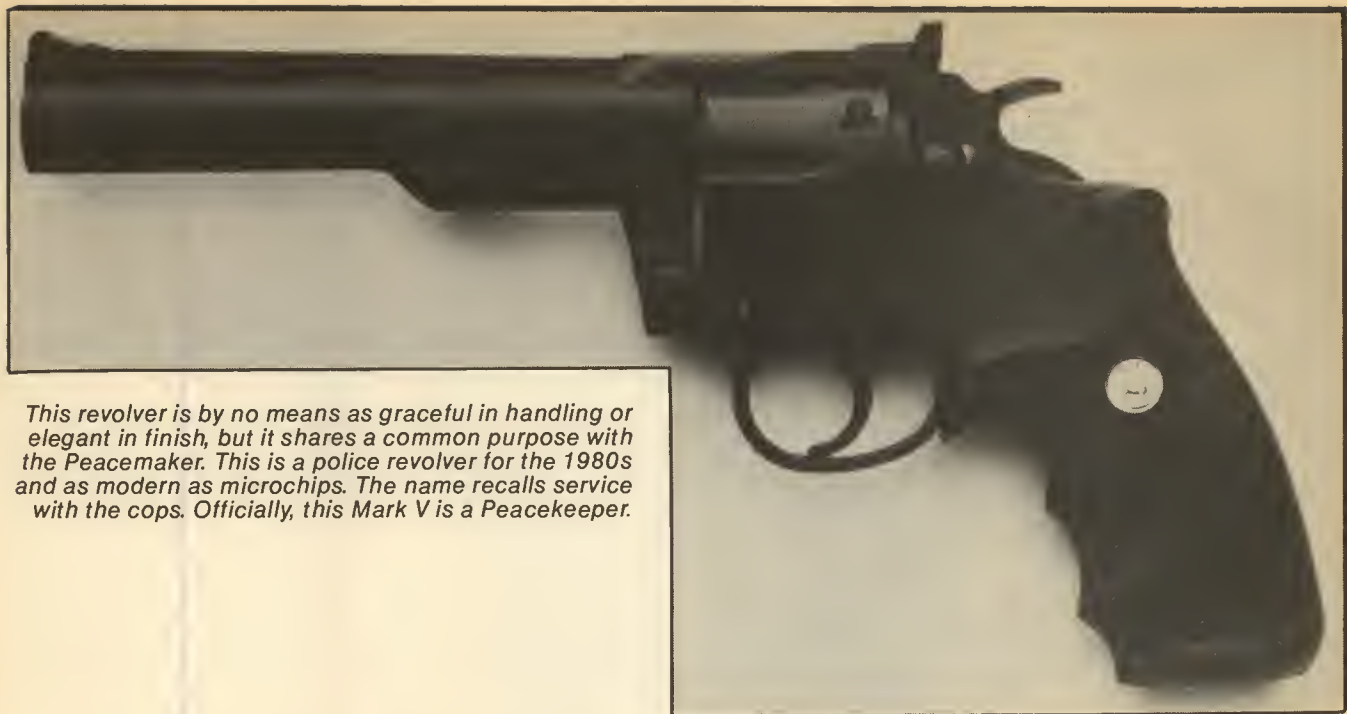
But the revolver that unquestionably was the most popular on the frontier was a revolver that was popular with *everyone*: outlaws, soldiers, miners, saloonkeepers and peace officers. It is no surprise that the Single Action Army revolver was called, among other things, a Peacemaker. It's mildly amusing to realize that Bob Platkin, a Colt executive of a century later, came up with a nifty name for a new revolver intended for the police market: the *Peacekeeper*.

While the early Colt revolvers were dominating the American handgun scene, the other major maker of handguns, Smith & Wesson, was also producing a wide variety of



*On the rough and ready frontier, a policeman needed a gun that could handle hard use and keep on comin.' The answer was provided by Col. Sam Colt. Officially it had other names, but frontiersmen called it Peacemaker.*





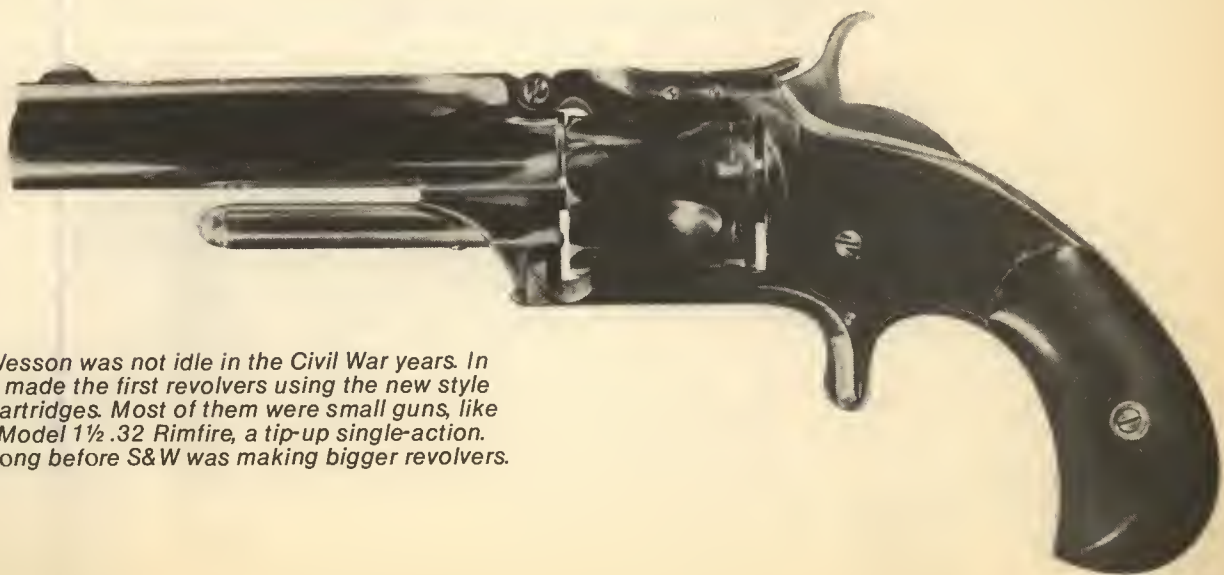
*This revolver is by no means as graceful in handling or elegant in finish, but it shares a common purpose with the Peacemaker. This is a police revolver for the 1980s and as modern as microchips. The name recalls service with the cops. Officially, this Mark V is a Peacekeeper.*

revolvers. S&W never made a cap-and-ball handgun. Their first guns were the first firearms to use metallic cartridges. Most of the first Smith & Wessons were diminutive .22 rimfires, but by the early 1870s, the company was turning out some hefty hinged-frame revolvers in serious calibers. They would have made fine police revolvers, but most were sold overseas.

By the turn of the century, the frontiers were conquered and most police officers wanted a different sort of revolver. Police uniforms in most locations featured a double-breasted blue coat that reached down to the fingertips. Cops, knowing that there was little chance of needing the revolver, wanted something compact but adequately powerful that would conceal under the coat. Both Smith & Wesson and Colt made guns for this market.

In the first half of this century, Colt offered revolvers in three different sizes that would suit policemen. The smaller ones were built on several versions of the Police Positive frame. More were crafted around the medium-frame size, sometimes called the ".41" frame. This designation was in realization of the fact that many of them were chambered for the now-obsolete .41 Long Colt round. Initially the guns were called Army Specials, but Colt saw the possibilities of a catchy name and called them Official Police models. From 1908 until 1970, when the "OP" was discontinued for a Mark III version, Colt produced many thousands of these reliable guns. They filled a lot of holsters.

Colt also got some mileage out of a larger framed gun. In such diverse locations as the state of New York, Canada and even on the Mexican border, some policemen carried

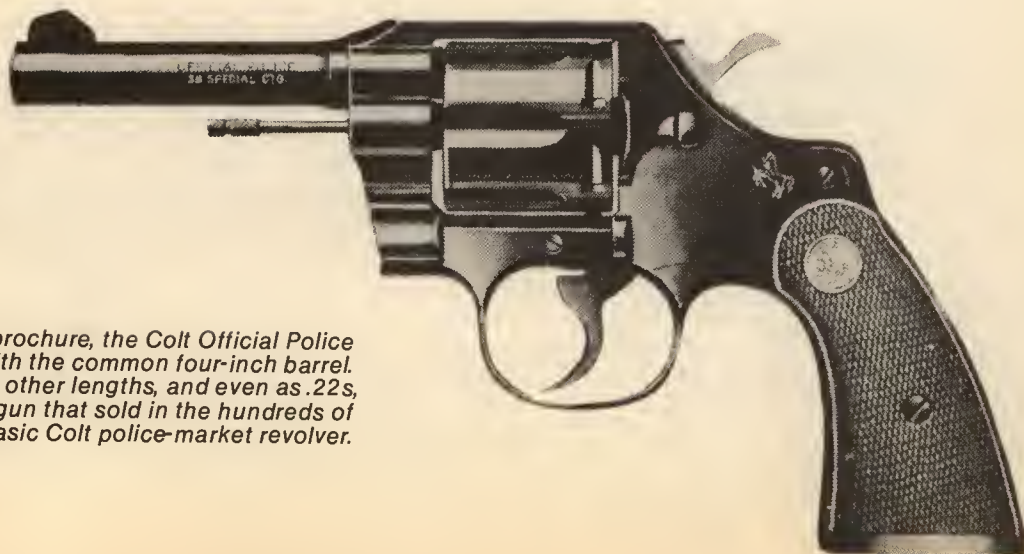


*Smith & Wesson was not idle in the Civil War years. In fact, S&W made the first revolvers using the new style metallic cartridges. Most of them were small guns, like this New Model 1 1/2 .32 Rimfire, a tip-up single-action. It wasn't long before S&W was making bigger revolvers.*

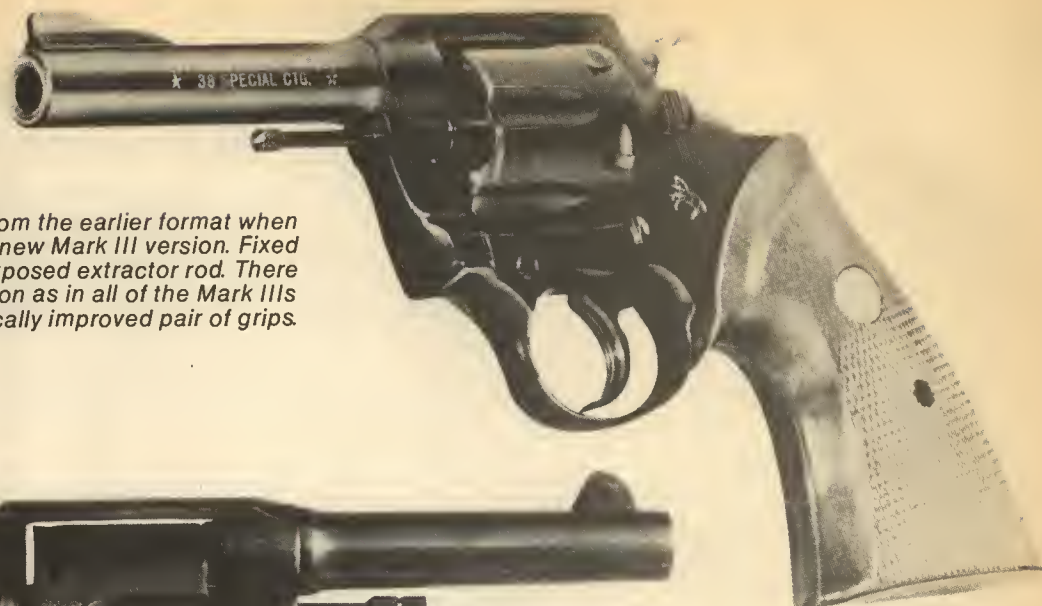
*In the first half of this century, the Colt company produced police service revolvers in three sizes. From the top: A Colt New Service, then an Army Special, which was re-named the Official Police, and at the bottom, the Cobra. The latter gun was a variation of the Police Positive Special. Some of these guns are still in use, but the parts situation for them is getting a little grim. Note that all three guns are wearing a common after-market accessory called a grip adapter. Made by Pachmayr.*



*From an old company brochure, the Colt Official Police revolver is pictured with the common four-inch barrel. They were also made in other lengths, and even as .22s, but this is the plain gun that sold in the hundreds of thousands. It was the basic Colt police-market revolver.*





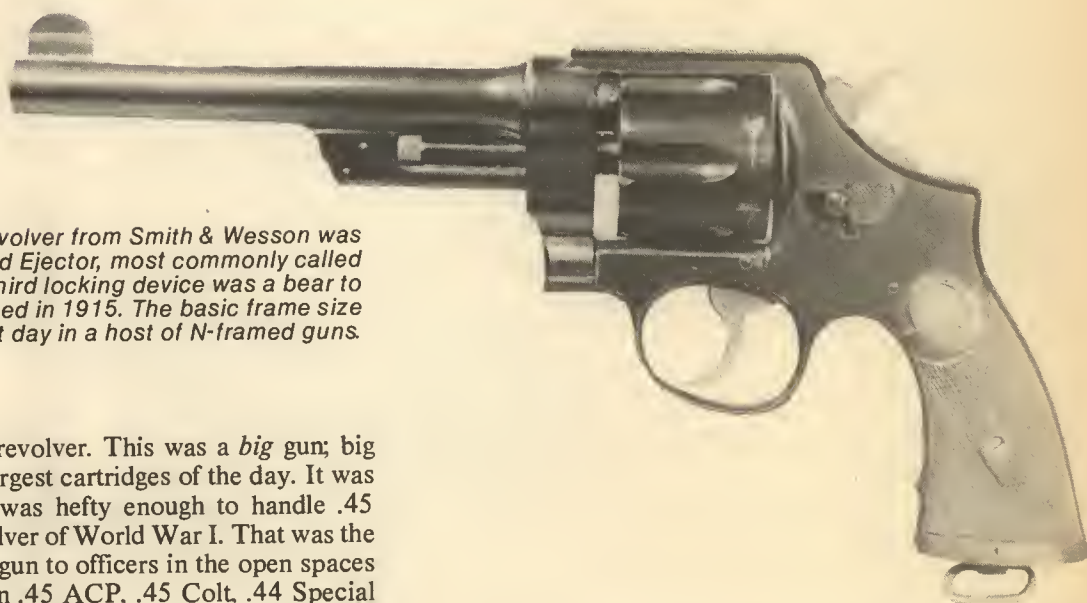


Colt did not stray very far from the earlier format when they revised the OP in the new Mark III version. Fixed sights, four-inch barrel, exposed extractor rod. There are differences in the action as in all of the Mark IIIs and the gun sports a drastically improved pair of grips.

Colt New Service revolvers were really big guns. They weren't as popular in the police field because of their size, but they did find their way into RCMP holsters. For a time, the U.S. Border Patrol used them chambered for the .38 Special cartridge. There were also some .357s.



The comparable BIG revolver from Smith & Wesson was the First Model .44 Hand Ejector, most commonly called the Triple-Lock. The third locking device was a bear to produce and was dropped in 1915. The basic frame size continues to the present day in a host of N-framed guns.

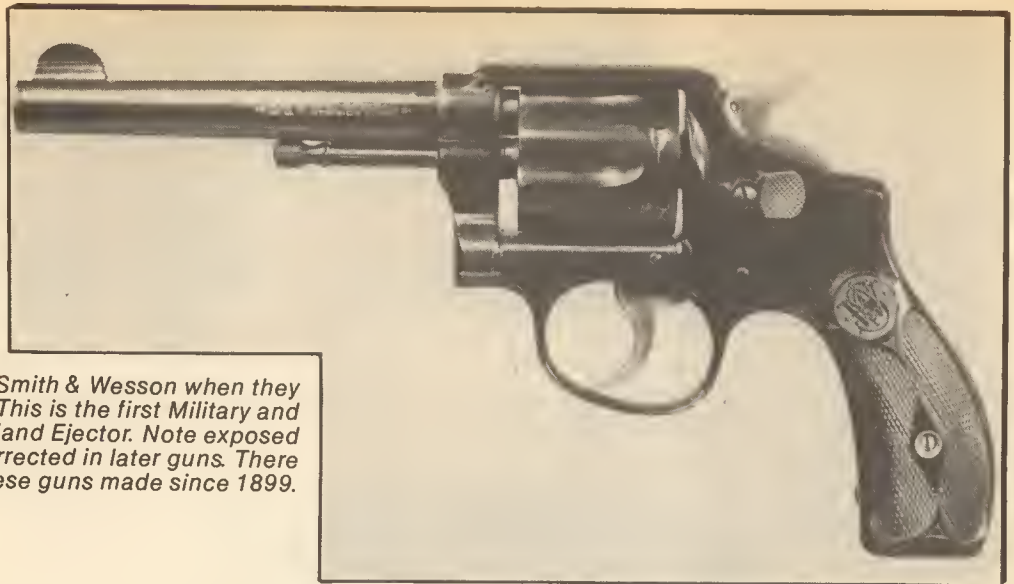


the Colt New Service revolver. This was a *big* gun; big enough to handle the largest cartridges of the day. It was the New Service that was hefty enough to handle .45 ACPs as the 1917 revolver of World War I. That was the major attraction of the gun to officers in the open spaces country; Colt made it in .45 ACP, .45 Colt, .44 Special and even some of the black powder cartridges. Sadly, the New Service did not return to the Colt catalog when World War II was over.

Smith & Wesson wasn't idle in the first half of the century. Some of their guns were the tiny kind, little .32s and .38s on the small frame. They also made a line of the really big guns, which were descendants of the famous Triple-Lock revolver of 1905. Like the Colt New Service, these revolvers would handle the big revolver cartridges. The actual designation of the frame was the .44 Hand Ejector. In 1935, when the company electrified the shooting world

with news of a handgun *magnum* cartridge, the gun itself was built on the reliable .44 Hand Ejector frame. The gun was the famous .357 magnum revolver. In later years, the frame would come to be designated the N frame.

But it was a somewhat smaller and more graceful gun that went into a majority of police holsters. Smith & Wesson produced the Military and Police Model revolver starting in 1899 and they show no signs of stopping as this is written in 1987. The M&P has been made, with little variation except in butt-shape and barrel-length options,



*It was a fortuitous day for Smith & Wesson when they made the first of these. This is the first Military and Police Model, called the .38 Hand Ejector. Note exposed end of the ejector rod, corrected in later guns. There have been several million of these guns made since 1899.*

for the entirety of the Twentieth Century. No other gun has served so long in active service — and that includes the venerable Colt .45 auto. The company now calls the revolver a Model 10 and the frame is termed a K frame. It's a million-seller several times over.

While there were other manufacturers producing wheel-guns in the first half of the Twentieth Century, as well as a number of fine automatic pistols on the market, the indisputable fact is that all policemen carried a Colt or a Smith & Wesson revolver. In the World War II period, both firms produced guns by the hundreds of thousands. When the war was over, it was a whole new ball game.

Smith & Wesson entered the post-war period badly in need of a managerial overhaul. They got just that when Carl Hellstrom became president and rebuilt the company. His efforts were calculated to make Smith & Wesson competitive with Colt, who had come out of the war smelling like the proverbial rose. The police market demanded new and better guns from both companies and that post-war period was one of intense competition. Then a new guy came along and butted heads with both of the giants. He

was Bill Ruger and he didn't produce a true police gun until the early Seventies. But when he did, he made it a three-horse race.

In the 1950s, Smith & Wesson was busily attempting to meet every possible handgun need. Most of their effort went into producing variations on the established excellence of the three frame sizes already discussed. One revolver that sold exceptionally well was the Highway Patrolman or Model 28. Lots of policemen would have liked to have the sexy .357 magnum revolver introduced in the 1930s, but couldn't afford the premium price the gun demanded. The 28 was just a plain-finished version of the fancy guns and it sold — and sells — quite well at a substantially lower price.

Another revolver was the famous Chiefs Special, a tiny five-shot .38 Special built on the J frame, a lengthened variation of the I frame. It was a popular gun with concealed-carry officers. It's not surprising, though, that the real best-seller was a variation on the venerable M&P. The gun was in the firm's series of "Masterpiece" revolvers. They called it the Combat Masterpiece or Model 15.



*For lots of detectives, this little revolver was received like ice cream on the 4th of July. It's a famous Chiefs Special, one of the guns that came out of the post-war revision of the model line. A .38 Special, the Model 36 used the diminutive J frame and a five-shot cylinder.*





*The Military & Police Model today. Now it has a model number (10) and you can get it in several barrel lengths and butt shapes. As seen in this photo, there's a heavy barrel version. There is almost no change from the gun across the page. The latest version is the stainless 64.*

The Model 15 was a six-shot, medium-frame revolver fitted with an adjustable rear sight and a front ramp sight contoured for easy drawing from the policeman's holster. With a four-inch barrel, the Model 15 rather quickly became the police revolver in the 1950s. Colt responded with the Trooper series of guns in several barrel lengths. These guns, including one called the Three Fifty Seven, were one

up on Smith & Wesson. They were medium-sized, built on modified Official Police frames, and therefore easy to carry, but they were chambered for the .357 magnum cartridge. They were much more versatile.

Smith & Wesson responded to the magnum business with a heavier version of the Model 15 in .357. They called it the Model 19 Combat Magnum and it became quite an



*For several years, this was the aristocrat of the S&W line. Introduced in the 1930s, the .357 magnum was the first of the modern performance revolver cartridges and the guns were beautifully (and expensively) fitted up.*



*So the company catered to the working cop who wanted a .357 with this one. Called the Highway Patrolman, the Model 28 was exactly the same gun as the fancier model 27, but finished with a functional dull matte surface.*



*The Model 10 updated became the Combat Masterpiece. It was, and is, a popular revolver. Called the Model 15, the gun is a four-inch K frame in .38 Special, sporting adjustable rear and ramp front sight. It was one of the several fine guns in the "Masterpiece" line of the 1950s.*

instant best-seller, even to the cops who used .38 Specials by departmental regulation. The Model 19 was much like the Model 15, except for the slightly longer cylinder and heavy, underlugged barrel. The added weight was well forward and that had a positive effect on balance; Model 19s handled beautifully.

While Colt was luring the police buyer with Troopers and Three Fifty Sevens, they also were producing an elegant revolver called the Python. It was an expensive proposition, and since sheriffin' wasn't all that lucrative in the 1950s, not many cops could afford one. The Python was really a Trooper all dolled up with fancy stocks and a different barrel. It was a fine revolver, renowned for its accuracy, but its real advantage was the contour of the barrel. Colt put what amounts to a trend-setting barrel on the flossy new gun.

The feature was a housing that shrouded the exposed ejector rod from blows received in rough handling. S&W had used this feature on many guns over the years, but this

was the first Colt revolver to do so. Colt went a little farther by running the underbarrel shroud all the way out to the muzzle. The effect was to shift the weight subtly forward in the shooter's hand. In the course of time, this turned out to be a much-copied feature. In fact, custom gunsmiths developed methods of installing Colt Python barrels on both S&W and Ruger revolvers, thereby producing "Smythons" and "Cougars."

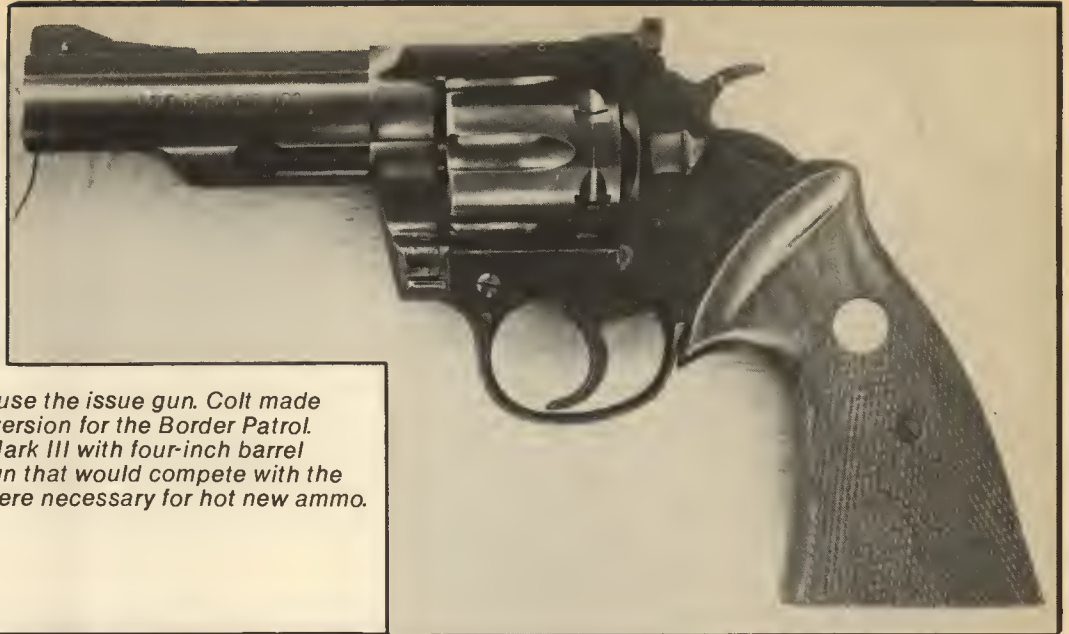
Towards the latter part of the 1960s, there were lots of changes taking place in law enforcement. As a result of changes in society itself and in the interpretation of laws, unnecessary violence attending the Civil Rights movement and public reaction to the Vietnam war, law enforcement came to be less of a job and more of a profession. And professionals demand more in the way of professional equipment.

Some of that philosophy affected revolver development. For one thing, this was the era of experimentation into better handgun ammunition. Tom Ferguson dwells on this



*But when policemen grew dissatisfied with the heavier .357s on the market as well as with .38 Specials, S&W added the Model 19 to the line. It was also a K frame and handled the .357 ammo of the 1950s with improved metallurgy. Border Patrolman Bill Jordan got serial #1.*



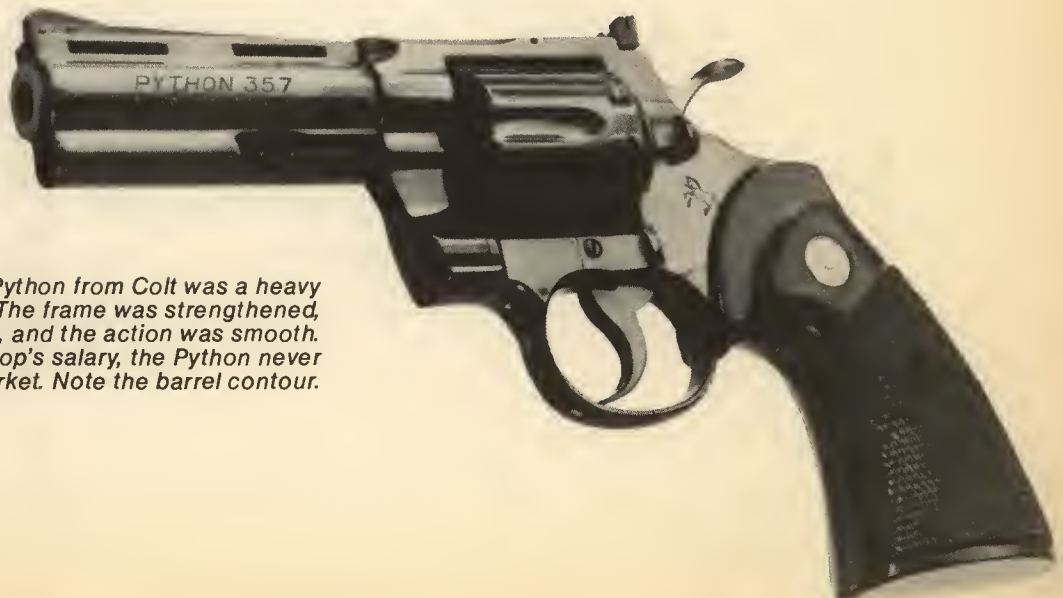


*Other Border Patrolmen use the issue gun. Colt made the Mark III in a special version for the Border Patrol. The gun was a Trooper Mark III with four-inch barrel and it was a mid-sized gun that would compete with the Model 19. Strong guns were necessary for hot new ammo.*



subject in greater depth in Chapter Five. Better ammunition was necessary, because more policemen were actually shooting more often at criminals who were themselves better armed and more skillful with guns than ever before. There was also more of an impetus to the revolver makers to make better guns, because they were losing a part of their market to automatic pistols.

Colt met the challenge with a completely redesigned series of revolvers built on the Mark III frame. This was a mid-sized revolver using modernized coil springs throughout the action. Most of them were in the Trooper series with adjustable sights and shrouded barrels, but there were some plain sight variations. The Mark IIIs replaced the Trooper, Official Police and Officer's Model Match revolvers. Unfortunately, there were some problems with Mark IIIs, and they never took the share of the market that



*At its heart, the elegant Python from Colt was a heavy Official Police revolver. The frame was strengthened, the sights were adjustable, and the action was smooth. Ruinously expensive on a cop's salary, the Python never sold well in the police market. Note the barrel contour.*



*This photo serves to illustrate the relative sizes of revolvers in the extensive Smith & Wesson line. From the top: N frame Model 624 .44 Special; L frame Model 686 .357 magnum; K frame Model 65 .357 magnum and J frame Model 60 .38 Special. Also note that Smith will sell you almost anything made of stainless steel. They were the pioneers in the use of the stuff in guns.*

Colt envisioned. In the mid-1980s, the Mark III guns were phased out in favor of the Mark V system. It was an improvement of no small magnitude.

Smith & Wesson continued to pin their law enforcement market to one variation or another of the unendingly suc-

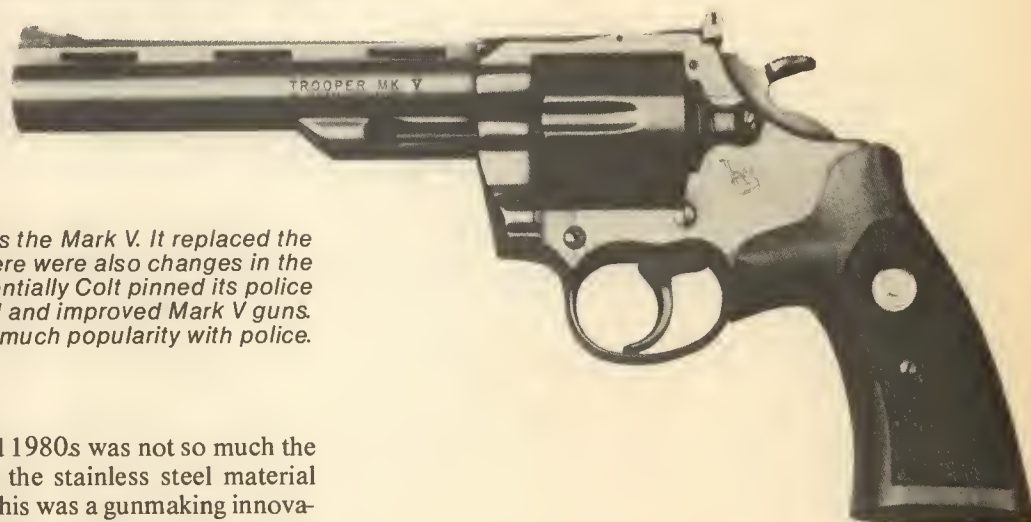
cessful K frame. The Model 10 itself got a heavy barrel and a slightly redesigned short action. Most of the interest was in the Models 15 and 19, with some diehards clinging to the Highway Patrolman Model on the larger frame. The more important reason that Smith & Wesson took home most of



*When the super-hot performance ammo of the late 1970 era started battering mid-frame guns badly, S&W made the L-frame revolver, a larger version of the K. It was a bit heavier than the earlier gun and it will handle any .357 totter. Also note the Python-type barrel contour.*



*Ruger got into the double-action revolver business with the Security-Six, a fine modern revolver about the same size as the Model 19. In time, Ruger offered this gun in stainless steel. It was well received in police circles. Ruger also produced plain sight and round butt options.*



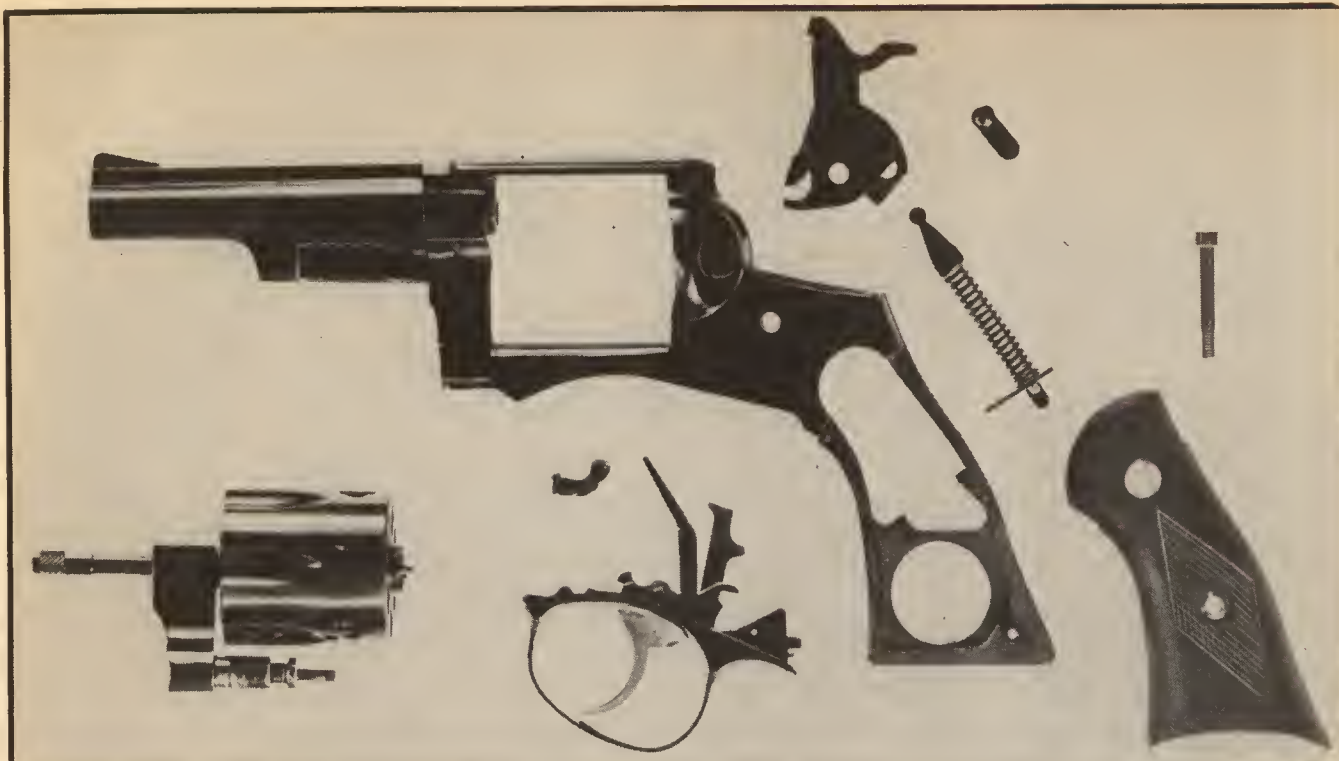
*Colt redid the Trooper as the Mark V. It replaced the Mark III Trooper and there were also changes in the other mid-frame .357s. Essentially Colt pinned its police market hopes to the revised and improved Mark V guns. The Mark IIIs never gained much popularity with police.*

the marbles in the 1970s and 1980s was not so much the guns themselves, but rather the stainless steel material from which they are made. This was a gunmaking innovation of great significance. It meant that an officer could handle his revolver in any climate or condition and not fear corrosion on the exposed surfaces. This all started with the Model 60, but it spread to many of the other guns in the line. Everyone wanted a rust-free handgun.

Smith & Wesson was faced with a dilemma in the ammunition situation. When the K-frame Model 19 was introduced in the 1950s, some authorities felt that .357 ammunition would tear the gun apart quickly. That didn't

happen, but the time did come when the ammo changed to the degree that it was hard on the relatively light revolver. Most of the evolution was in the period when ammo was changing to the modern high-performance stuff. S&W responded to the need for a somewhat stronger gun by introducing the L frame in 1981.

The L-frame models were called the 586 and 686 with



*This is what gave both Smith & Wesson and Colt cause for concern. A basic Ruger double-action revolver can be field stripped with a coin and in a matter of seconds. It is a simple and rugged police revolver, one that will withstand years of use and even abuse. Rugers were priced competitively since they were made by the investment casting process. The individual components are thick, strong chunks of good steel.*

adjustable sights, 581 and 681 with fixed sights. There's hardly a change in the gun except for a slightly taller frame, larger cylinder and heavier barrel. The barrel is a good bit heavier than anything that S&W had ever made, because they went to a full-length underlug just like the Colt Python's. The new gun took off as expected and is currently the leading seller in the company's law enforcement line.

Both S&W and Colt faced a challenge in the law enforcement arena when Ruger decided to get into the act in the early 1970s. Having never produced a double-action revolver, Ruger had the benefit of starting with a blank sheet of paper. The resulting gun was a winner from the start.

Bill Ruger called the revolver a Security-Six. It was a medium-framed gun, just slightly larger than the S&W and about the same size as the Colts. The Security-Six had a unique lockwork system that was modular and which fitted into the frame of the gun without using a fitted sideplate like both of the other manufacturers' competing guns. Although the first guns produced were of blued steel and had adjustable sights, it wasn't long before Ruger was making them in stainless steel and with fixed sights. Fixed sights gave the gun a Service-Six name tag and, when the butt was rounded, it became a Speed-Six.

After an initial period of hesitation, the market accepted the new guns warmly. They have been in production for less than twenty years, but the Security-Six and its variants have sold exceptionally well. Security-Sixes are easy guns to repair and maintain. They are sturdy in the extreme; probably more so than the two competitors.

Ruger, Colt and Smith & Wesson all entered the decade of the 1980s fully aware of the fierce competition in the police revolver market. Colt was particularly concerned in the sense that their revolvers had climbed in price to the point that neither police department nor individual officers were buying them. Ruger was getting a bigger piece of the pie, but still had not been able to wrest the lead from an entrenched Smith & Wesson. And all three were painfully aware of the advancing menace that loaded fifteen shots in a magazine.

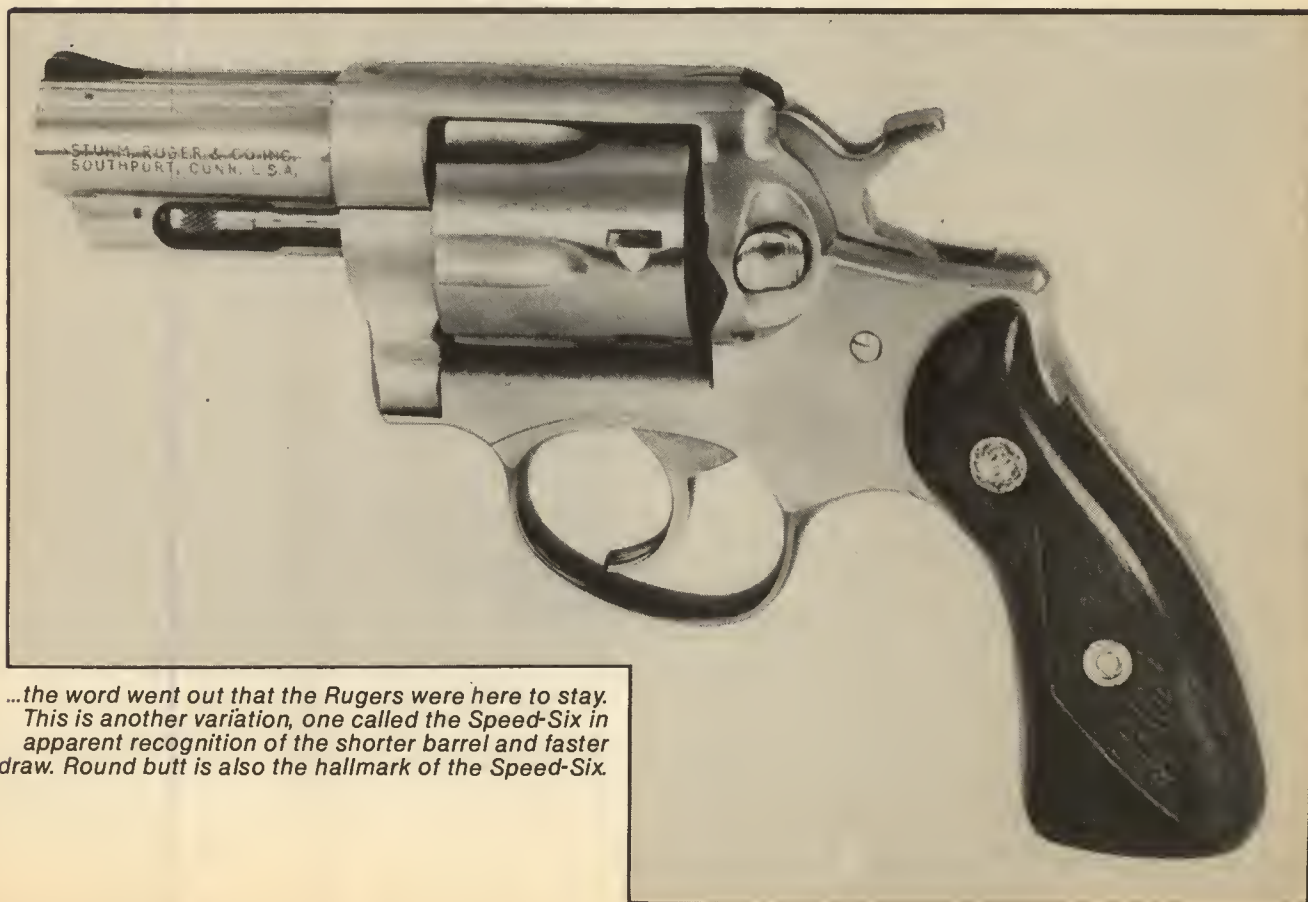
All three are currently producing new guns that are intended to be the flagship of police revolvers. Two of the three are so new — less than two years — that firm usage data on them has yet to be compiled. The guns are the Colt King Cobra, the Ruger GP-100 and the Smith & Wesson Model 686. Before detailing the specifications and peculiarities of each, let's resolve one question first. Any of the three is more than adequate in the accuracy department for life as a police sidearm. We'll look at each gun in turn, checking for details, disadvantages and particularly noteworthy features. Also, in view of the overwhelming popularity of the four-inch barrel, we'll look at them in that form. Longer barrels are available on all three guns, but won't be considered here. All, by the way, are .357 magnums.

The Colt King Cobra is a forty-two-ounce revolver made of a matte-finished stainless steel. The main frame of the gun is forged, with smaller parts apparently made by sintered metal technology. The sights are the familiar Colt Accro rear and a pinned-in red ramp front sight with a red





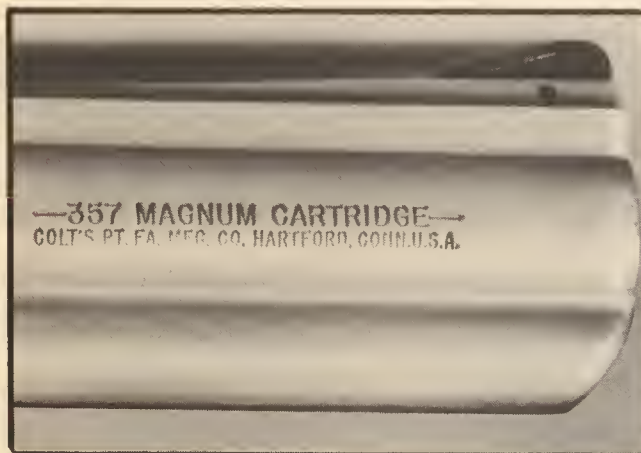
*Just plain basic gun. The Service-Six is a fixed sight version of the Security-Six. It has all of the desirable features of the fancier gun. Ruger encountered initial reluctance to buy in the conservative police market. But when a few agencies made quantity purchases...*



*...the word went out that the Rugers were here to stay. This is another variation, one called the Speed-Six in apparent recognition of the shorter barrel and faster draw. Round butt is also the hallmark of the Speed-Six.*



*The current flagship of the Colt police gun fleet is the King Cobra. Made in both four- and six-inch barrels, the gun is stainless steel and mounts excellent adjustable sights. A new barrel contour has been added as well as a new material, but the basic gun is a Mark V action.*



*Colt has made a slight change to that familiar Python barrel contour. It's now radiused off to resist snagging the holster edge. The lug is solid clear to the muzzle and shifts the weight of the gun forward in the hand.*

insert. The barrel has a full-length solid rib on top and a full-length underlug that runs clear to the muzzle. The cylinder latch is rounded nicely for handling, pulling back to open in the style of all Colt DA revolvers. The grip frame is revealed when the rubber stocks are removed. It has a downward projecting lug which houses the coil main-spring. The lug is small, leaving a great deal of the mass of the revolver's butt to be taken up by the grips themselves.

Essentially, the King Cobra is an up-dated version of the earlier Mark V gun. The only other Mark V which continues to exist in the catalog is the matte blue Peacekeeper. The Mark V action was introduced by Colt several years ago. Unquestionably, it is an improvement over the earlier Mark IIIs and the original Troopers, which had bad problems with staying timed. King Cobras sell for \$389.95 at this writing.

The Ruger GP-100 is also a new gun on the market, introduced in 1986. Initially, the GP-100 was made and priced as a blued steel revolver, but a stainless steel version was announced in early 1987. Weighing about forty ounces, the GP-100 has a new and different action which borrows features from the earlier Security-Six revolvers as well as the massive Redhawk. Early reports suggest that the new action is well received in the field. The GP-100 has a modular frame system much like the Colt's, with a frame lug

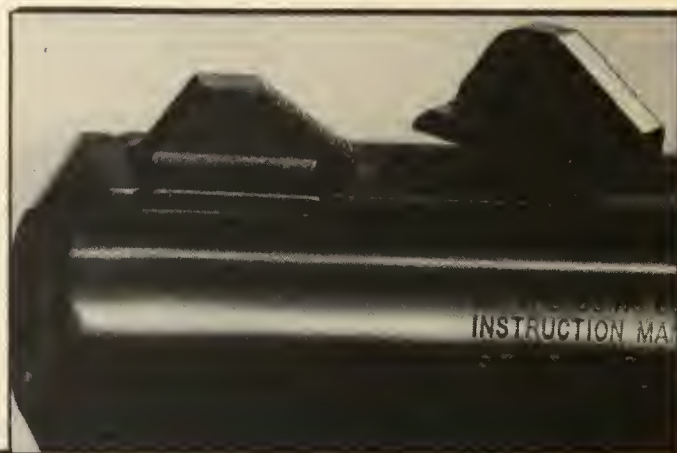


*This view shows the King Cobra cylinder open. It also shows the easy-to-use cylinder latch. Visualize a speed loading device mated to the rear of the cylinder. The clearance appears ample. The extractor star is different.*





*Ruger's superb new GP-100 is a completely new revolver that borrows design details from both the Security-Six and the massive Redhawk. The action has similarities to both of them. The underbarrel lug is another that was first seen on the Colt Python. Below: One of the best features of the new Ruger GP-100 is the snap-in front sight. Properly exploited, this feature could sell lots of guns. Replacement unit is steel, made by Millett.*



*Above: Another excellent feature is the cylinder latch, which rocks inward to release the cylinder. It's out of the way when the gun is held in firing position and is a valuable asset to an already fine revolver. Right: A view of the butt of the GP-100. The grips are a pair, but surround an inner lug which houses the revolver's mainspring. This leaves plenty of room for custom grip makers. Factory grips are rubber with wood inserts.*





*A Smith & Wesson for the Eighties and beyond, the L-framed Model 686 has lots of the best features: It's made of stainless steel, has a familiar action and feel, balances well with the new barrel lug and is backed by an established network of warranty stations. The sights are a bit fragile and the cylinder latch is awful as seen in the lower photo. It works OK, but it needs a drastic reshaping. If possible, the latch needs to be a bit higher.*



housing coil mainspring and two-piece wrap-around rubber grips. The grips have wood inset panels on the sides. The barrel underlug goes clear to the muzzle.

The GP-100 cylinder latch rocks inward to release the cylinder. The rear sight is fully adjustable and the front sight is quite different. Like the Ruger Redhawks, the front sight on this revolver is a snap-in unit which can be changed without altering the gun's zero. The base of the sight is identical to that on the Redhawk. For that gun, you can get replaceable plastic sights in four colors. Those are too high

for use in a GP-100, but a set made for that gun would be welcomed. Blued GP-100s sell for \$375.

The Smith & Wesson 686 is an L-frame gun weighing forty-one ounces. The sights are the familiar fully adjustable rear with a white outline around the rear sight notch. The front is a red ramp. The barrel uses an underlug remarkably like the other maker's. Again, we have forged stainless steel, although the gun can be purchased as the 586 when it is made from blued steel.

The S&W cylinder latch, a dished-out button of sharply



checkered steel, pushes forward to unlatch the cylinder. The frame of the revolver is made in the shape that has not materially changed in ninety years. The 686s are fitted with oversized target stocks of South American hardwood, with checkered panels on each side. The action of the gun works off of the tension of a leaf spring which certainly has stood the test of time. Smith & Wesson wants \$374 for one of them, according to the '87 *Gun Digest*.

Now, comments and critiques on the three: The best rear sight and the second best cylinder latch belong to the Colt. The Accro sight protects the sight leaf down in a sturdy boss of metal. The Ruger does the same thing, but the Colt unit seems a bit stronger. The Colt cylinder latch is smooth; nothing to catch. A shooter's thumb can ride the latch without fear of accidentally opening the cylinder. The S&W latch is the worst, needing a drastic re-shaping at least and probably a total overhaul.

Of all the rear sights, S&W makes the one most likely to be broken or bent. Its adjustments are fully as precise as the others, but the rear sight blade is plainly exposed to the elements. On the subject of sights, consider the one out front. On the Colt and S&W, they're pretty much the same. The Ruger has a snap-in insert. Properly exploited, this feature could solve all sight-adjustment problems.

The King Cobra has finger-gripped Pachmayr grips and they need to be replaced with another variation of the Pachmayr or smooth wood ones. Finger grips of any sort do not belong on a combat revolver. The Ruger has smooth rubber with wood side panels. They're not only practical, but are shaped to fit the majority of hands reasonably well. Clearly, the GP-100 "feels" great in the shooting grasp. The GP-100 also has the rock-in cylinder latch which is enormously desirable, particularly when speedloaders are used.

The more that you look at the three guns, the more you are struck by the similarities. They are within a few dollars and they're all durable guns. In fact, that is the strongest impression given by each — that each is a strong gun. They are made for magnum ammo and hard use and all seem to be able to take it.

Because of the long-established familiarity of policemen with the S&W revolver, it stands to reason that the Massachusetts armsmaker is in the lead and likely will stay there for the foreseeable future. But it isn't going to be as easy as it once was. Smith & Wesson is being challenged by both Colt and Ruger.

And the guy that benefits most is the cop, the Constable On Patrol, who now has a slightly wider variety of the best revolvers in the world from which to choose.



*Only Smith & Wesson offers a "M&P" rendering of their frontrunning police revolver. The Model 681 has all of the other features of the L frame, but the sights are typical fixed-notch rear and ramp front. Once they are adjusted for a particular shooter (and it can be done), fixed sights are the best way to go in active service.*



## CHAPTER TWO

# POLICEMEN AND PISTOLS



*It's a Luger and not a pistol likely to have ever graced a policeman's holster, at least in the United States. But it is a pistol that goes back to the earliest days of prejudice against automatics in law enforcement. Times change.*

### *Automatic Pistols, The Ones In The Holsters Of More Policemen Every Year.*

**A**UTOMATIC PISTOLS have been around since the turn of the century. Most of them have been respectably accurate and durable handguns. Despite the fact that most of the armies of the world have long since adopted the automatic as a personal defense firearm, the American policeman goes ahead with the reliable and familiar revolver. As already discussed, the revolver has been updated periodically and currently enjoys a position where it is at the peak of its development.

The reluctance, even refusal, of American police agencies to consider the automatic pistol as a duty firearm is changing slowly. The reluctance is based on tradition, misconception and even fact. When a gun has served so long

and so well as the revolver undeniably has, then traditionally it is hard to replace. More significantly, perhaps, the means of training — ranges, courses of fire, maintenance training, schedule time — and a lot of other things aren't going to change without some benefit that will outweigh the high costs of all these matters.

Moreover, the automatic suffers from misconceptions that sully its reputation. Many misconceptions arise from the almost universally inadequate military pistol training that was provided to millions of Americans. The military regards the pistol as a last-ditch firearm that won't be used





unless everything else has been tried or when the tactical situation has turned to the well known fecal commodity. It's presumed that this won't happen, so pistol training in the armed services gets short shrift. When it was conducted, for many years it was taught as a one-hand, bullseye-target exercise. That is not the way to build confidence in a weapon and most veterans don't recall their pistol education with confident resolve.

The misconceptions arising from the military use of the pistol are that the gun is unreliable, inaccurate and hard to learn. If the automatic pistol in question is a worn-out service gun, not well maintained and used by a soldier who hasn't had his marksmanship skills developed by a good training program, the criticism may well be justified.

But it doesn't have to be this way. With careful attention to a thoughtful and consistent training program, any police or military organization can arm their personnel confidently with the automatic pistol. The use of the firearm in American law enforcement is not only possible, but highly desirable. While it is not necessary to rehash the revolver-automatic pistol controversy, it is appropriate to mention that there are some distinct advantages to automatics. More than a few police agencies have taken note of this and the use of various self-loaders increases steadily.

*The most recently introduced automatic pistol for law enforcement purposes is the Smith & Wesson Model 645. This new stainless steel .45 ACP autoloader was chosen by Montebello, California, Police Department. Since the 645 was adopted, the Montebello officer's qualification scores have improved consistently. They're happy with it.*



Some police agencies went to autoloaders on a part-time basis as far back as the 1920s and 1930s. Usually, these were Colt .45s or, in some cases, the hot-rock .38 Super. When the police of the day changed to a heftier handgun, it was in response to a need for an improved firearm to deal with a more violent and dangerous class of criminal, the Dillingers and Parkers of those years.

Policemen of today probably take up the magazine-fed handgun with the same point of view. And a look at the newspapers of the past couple of decades will support their logic. A police officer starting a career in the mid-1980s stands a far greater chance of facing a shooting situation in his twenty-plus years on the job than his father might have experienced, if he pinned on a badge for the first time in the mid-1940s. Sadly, it is now a more violent world, even on the streets of America.

Rightly or wrongly, the automatic is perceived as better in the minds of its advocates, because it has greater "firepower." In the minds of most, this equates to more shots. Those who argue that six shots in a modern revolver are enough encounter a wall of logical resistance on the part of those who say, "What if they aren't?" Most policemen really aren't gun buffs and they simply want to survive. If a few more shots in the magazine of an automatic will help, why not use them?

*A modern automatic pistol, such as this Model 659 S&W, has an obvious advantage in the minds of its advocates. One round in the chamber, a magazine of fifteen rounds in the gun and two spares. The number will vary a bit from one gun to another, but it's close to fifty shots.*



*In pristine condition, this M1911 Colt is the first of a long line of Colts that have served Americans well. The modifications that were instituted later didn't do a thing but improve the grand old gun. The Colt .45 automatic was the first auto to be widely used in law enforcement.*

There are other reasons that help justify the automatic pistol for law enforcement use. The speed with which a revolver can be reloaded by a trained man is milliseconds less than the time in which the same guy can recharge an automatic. Speedloaders are a great boon to the wheelgunning street cop. Nevertheless, the average man can be trained in minimal time to reload an automatic even faster. Further, in some automatics, the removal and replacement of the magazine is possible with the handgun in a ready-to-fire status. Try that with a revolver!

*Even the most dedicated revolveman has a hard time countering the firepower argument. A modern revolver, such as this Smith & Wesson Model 686, carries six in the cylinder. Two speedloaders, like Safariland's easy-to-use model, raise the on-tap total to eighteen. That's usually enough — that is, until the day that it just isn't.*





Possibly the biggest single factor that started the automatic pistol, in general, towards acceptance in law enforcement was a particular automatic pistol — the Colt .45. It may have been the cartridge as much as it was the gun, but when the policemen of the early Sixties looked around for a better gun, they settled for old Slabsides, the gun that Daddy, maybe even Granddaddy, took to war.

The Colt .45 is a superb handgun, one that has been modified in dozens of ways for dozens of shooting needs. Right out of the box, the plain Government Model seldom needs more than a better set of sights and a breaking-in period. Many policemen are currently well armed with the seventy-five-year-old gun. The fact that modern ammunition is available for the pistol — ammo that works well in a wide variety of bullet weights — adds even more versatility.

While the Colt is a handgun that will seldom fail its owner, once in a while there will be a jam. The vast majority of malfunctions in auto pistols originate in poor ammo, poor maintenance of the pistol, or a poor inspection program that fails to turn up bent magazine lips. Sometimes, a .45 will stovepipe simply because the shooter is not holding the gun with an appropriately firm grip. To put these things in correct perspective, it should be noted that the same things occur in all other automatics and all but the freakish few can be prevented with training and inspection.

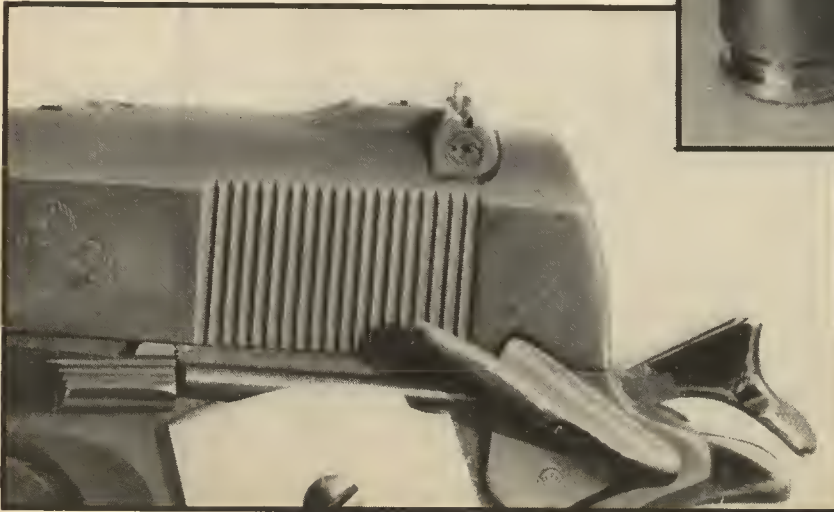
Nevertheless, objections on the basis of reliability were the major difficulties that challenged the first policemen who wanted to carry automatic pistols in their black basket-stamped holsters. The other objection was the fact that the Colt must be carried cocked-and-locked (hammer cocked, safety on) to be ready for instant use. In an open-topped police holster, that presents an unquestionably militant-appearing image that many police chiefs couldn't handle. The double-action revolver, with its hammer down and internal hammer block there to prevent accidental discharges, was easier to stomach.

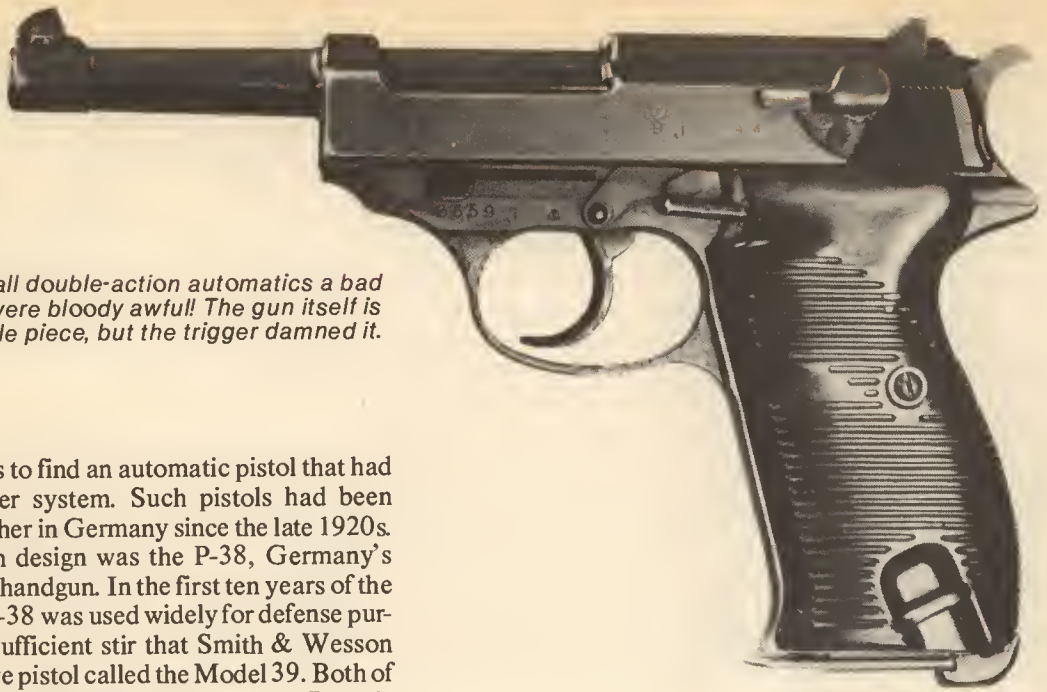
*Below: This Colt has been fitted with an excellent S&W rear sight, a common modification. The Colt is commonly carried as seen here — "cocked and locked" — which can work well with a good holster and intensive training.*



*A great many policemen who went to the autoloader in the early Sixties used out-of-the-box Colts or even GI pistols like the one seen above. The major complaint of everyone who uses a stock Colt is the too-small sights.*

*For the first sixty years of the life of the 9mmP round, plain ball ammo like the one on the right was OK. But different ammunition was required for greater stopping power and now we have Federal and Winchester JHPs.*

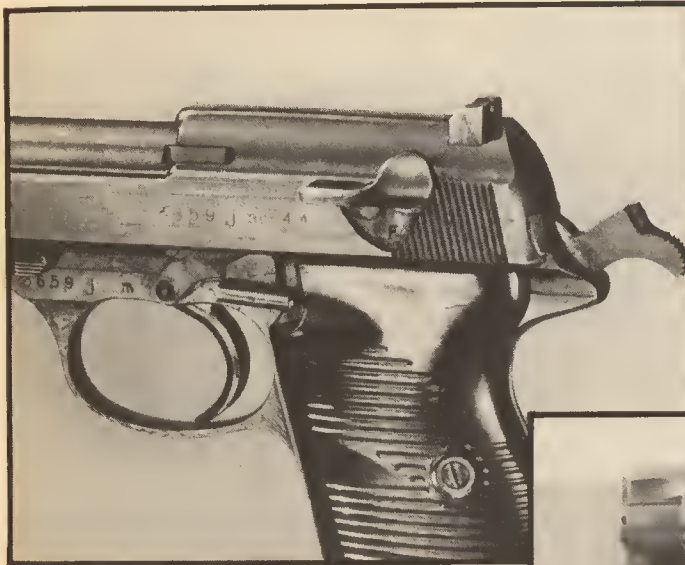




*Wartime P-38s gave all double-action automatics a bad reputation — they were bloody awful! The gun itself is a durable and reliable piece, but the trigger damned it.*

So the next step was to find an automatic pistol that had a double-action trigger system. Such pistols had been manufactured by Walther in Germany since the late 1920s. Walther's best known design was the P-38, Germany's World War II service handgun. In the first ten years of the post-war period, the P-38 was used widely for defense purposes and created a sufficient stir that Smith & Wesson produced a competitive pistol called the Model 39. Both of them have the now-standard double-action trigger. But this is a system which has some limitations.

*This P-38 has been fired double-action for the first shot and the slide has recoiled, leaving the hammer cocked. The human hand has difficulty adapting to single-action.*



The double-action revolver is shaped in such a way as to be fairly easy to handle in fast double-action firing. Typically, the revolver is fired by means of a smooth double-action, long-arc pull of the trigger for each shot. The best revolvers are a delight to manage in this way. The double-action automatic pistols are a bit different to shoot, since they work double-action for the first shot, but single-action for subsequent shots — and this fact has provoked vast amounts of criticism of DA autos as a whole.

The complaint is simply that the shooting hand is positioned in a particular set in order to lever the trigger through a necessarily long arc and the same set is awkward for second and subsequent shots. This is a valid complaint, but one that seems to gain more validity each time it is repeated.

*Even though the first Model 39s had a trigger system much like the Walther's, it was improved to the point where it could be learned. The new ones are quite good.*





When the observation was first made, it was when there weren't many double-action automatics around. The most common was the P-38, which has an exceptionally poor DA pull. The Smith & Wesson Model 39 which followed the Walther had a better pull, but the damage had been done. All double-action automatics developed a bad reputation on the basis of all those WWII P-38s.

There are a host of modern double-action automatics that have excellent double-action pulls and which are shaped in such a way that the double- to single-action transition is entirely manageable. They are not as good as the

best of the modern revolvers, but they are acceptable. This includes a number of modern Walthers and S&Ws. With training, the transition from one mode of firing to the other, as required by this style of handgun, is possible.

Many policemen now are armed with double-action automatics that they can use accurately and rapidly. The wave of the future is in the double-action automatic pistol. Most of them have an even greater advantage. They carry a lot more shots.

John Browning pioneered the use of a high-capacity automatic pistol magazine in his last design, the Hi-Power.



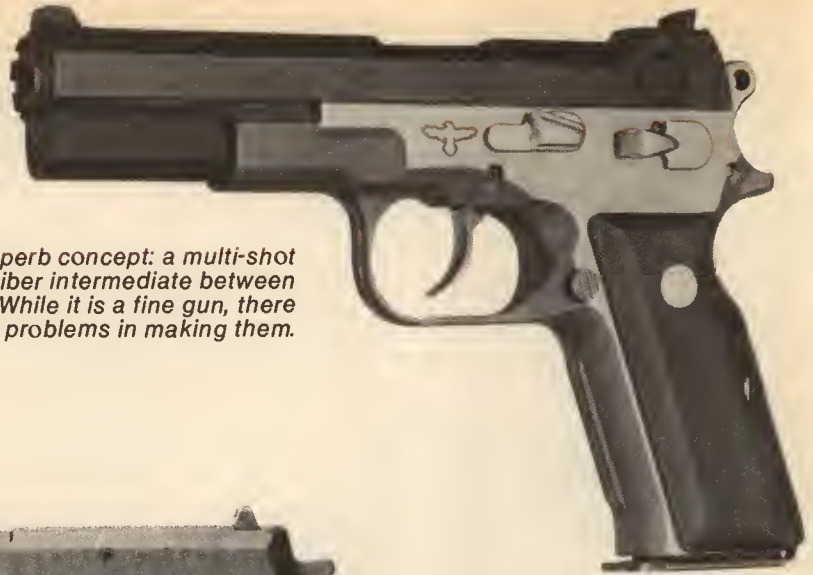
*Three times fifteen plus one equals forty-six rounds of 9mmP hollow points ready in a modern automatic and its spare magazines. It's getting to be the accepted norm.*



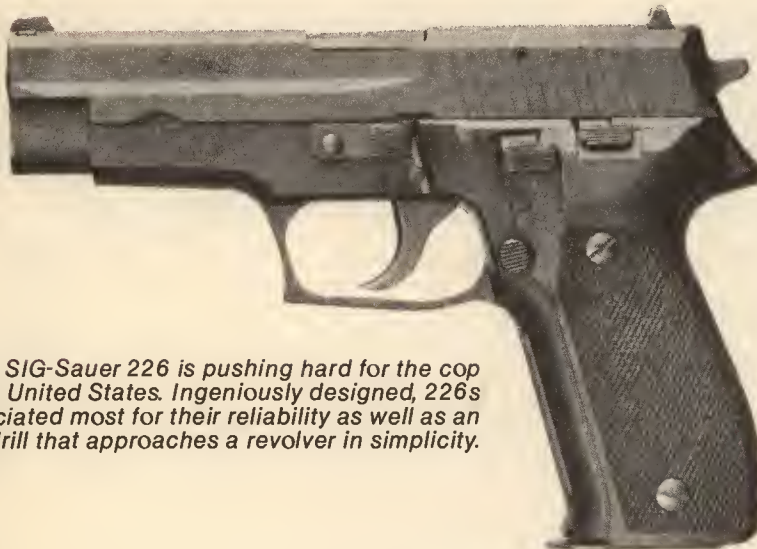
*Above: The Czech-made CZ 75 is an interesting pistol. While it has yet to be widely distributed in the U.S., the gun has features that make it usable for American cops.*

*The venerable Browning Hi-Power was one of the first 9mmPs to which the police turned. It is a single-action, remembered as the first with a high-capacity magazine.*





*The Bren Ten represents a superb concept: a multi-shot double-column pistol in a caliber intermediate between the 9mmP and the .45 ACP. While it is a fine gun, there won't be many in police use — problems in making them.*



*The excellent SIG-Sauer 226 is pushing hard for the cop market in the United States. Ingeniously designed, 226s are appreciated most for their reliability as well as an operating drill that approaches a revolver in simplicity.*

That pistol uses a magazine that stacks cartridges in two parallel rows for a total capacity of thirteen shots. Other pistols currently in use have a magazine that hold as many as nineteen shots, but the norm is fifteen. All of the 9mmP handguns that we will presently examine have fifteen-shot magazines.

Marksanship purists contend that the availability of more shots encourages the use of more shots. In other words, the shooter is apt to waste shots when he knows that his magazine is well nigh bottomless. In view of the stressful circumstances that attend a police shooting, this argument has a great deal of merit. When the increase in available shots is achieved by means of reducing the power in each shot, by going to the smaller, lighter bullet of the 9mmP, the argument becomes even more valid.

It is not a dilemma that we can readily resolve. The sole purpose of a policeman firing his service handgun is to halt some form of illegal and life-threatening activity. Usually, that activity is an armed assault on the policeman himself. Clearly, this is a form of activity that is best halted immediately. Is that best done with a more powerful gun with fewer available shots or a somewhat less powerful one that can fire more often?

The current tend is toward the modern 9mmP auto-

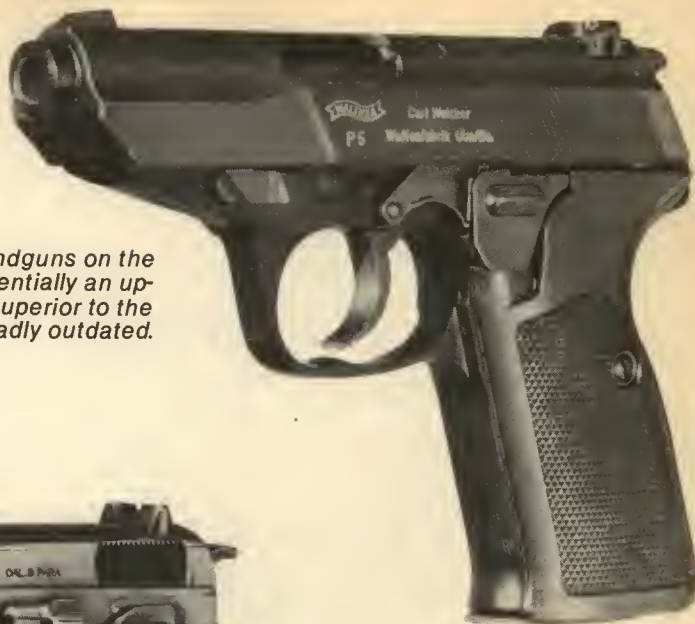
loader with a high capacity magazine. With proper training and good ammunition, this gun will do the job well. There's even a bit more credence to the argument for more shots in that more police gunfights are involving multiple opponents. Even with an increased use of the high capacity magazine 9mmP pistol, the .45 is still around in several forms.

It might be well to mention at this point that an ideal automatic might be the .45 in a double-column magazine form. As a practical matter, this is impossible. The .45 cartridges are sufficiently tubby in their girth that, when two rows of them are put together, the result is an uncomfortably thick butt section. Thus, .45s are universally single-column magazine guns. The possibility of a pistol using a cartridge intermediate between the 9mmP and the .45 is one that has been tried. It's called the Bren Ten and fires a 10mm round.

Before describing and analyzing the popular 9mmPs and .45s with which policemen might consider arming themselves, there are a few other guns to examine hopefully. The market is currently full of 9mmP handguns and the vast majority of them are double-action types with high capacity magazines. There are several new ones coming that bear close examination.



*One of the most highly regarded police handguns on the European market is the Walther P5. Essentially an updated P-38, the P5 has a trigger vastly superior to the older gun's. The eight-shot magazine is badly outdated.*



*CZ 75s are no longer rare mystery guns. While this one was made in Czechoslovakia, an improved pistol is being put together in Switzerland. Imported into the U.S. by Action Arms of Philadelphia, there ought to be plenty.*

One of these is the long-awaited double-action version of the fifty-year-old Browning Hi-Power. There have been reports of this particular pistol for several years, but none of them have yet surfaced in the United States. Pictures of the pistol show a handgun quite similar in appearance to the older gun, but with redesigned stocks and an elongated trigger guard to house the long-arc trigger system. If this auto turns out to have a usable trigger as well as the traditional durability of the parent, it will be a winner. One of the reasons is that the Hi-Power is the slimmest and most comfortable of the double-column magazine pistols.

Another interesting possibility is the new Walther P-88. Complete details on this gun are yet to be released, but it appears to be a fifteen-shot modification of the earlier P5. The P5 is an enormously successful update of the P-38, widely distributed amongst German and Scandinavian police. The DA trigger in the P5 is far superior to that of the P-38, but the greater improvement is in the controls. The P5 has a single lever on the left of the frame which serves as a slide stop as well as the decocking lever. The P-88 appears to have the same controls and, better yet, the literature which precedes the gun claims that the controls are repeated on the right side of the pistol. Further, the

magazine catch is advertised as ambidextrous. It should be a fine new police handgun.

Ruger's home-grown P85, the first centerfire autoloader from the Southport works, is also going to get a lot of attention from police armament experts. With the by-now-standard fifteen-shot magazine and a double-action trigger, the new Ruger is a chunky, solid handful of 9mmP autoloader. It could logically be the precursor of an entire line of centerfire handguns from Bill Ruger's people.

There are some others that would serve. Star's excellent Model 30 is a fine handgun, as is the eighteen-shot Steyr GB. Another pistol, once shrouded in mystery because of its behind-the-Iron Curtain origins, is the CZ 75. Originally made in Czechoslovakia, this gun now is being produced in Switzerland. Many of the better-known authorities in the pistol field, including Jeff Cooper, rate the CZ 75 highly. Part of the reason is because the controls are arranged to allow for a cocked-and-locked carry as well as the double-action trigger. The most notable feature of the CZ is the fact that the pistol is shaped, in every last detail, to be carried and used.

Despite the existence or imminent availability of these handguns, the mainstream of automatic pistols in 9mmP caliber suitable for police use in America is full with three



*Above: The frontrunners in the race for American police handgun supremacy are from the left, Model 92F Beretta, Smith & Wesson's Model 659 and the 226 from SIG-Sauer. All three are fine 9mmP guns.*



*Photos above and to the left illustrate an added virtue of these brands: compact versions of the full-sized guns. The 92F Compact with the 92F and the small 669 shown with the Model 659. All four of these guns have double-column magazines. SIG-Sauer makes the 225 with a single-column magazine — a reduced version of the 226.*



guns. These are the Smith & Wesson Model 59, the Beretta Model 92F and the SIG-Sauer Model 226. Each of the three has distinctive features not found in its competitors.

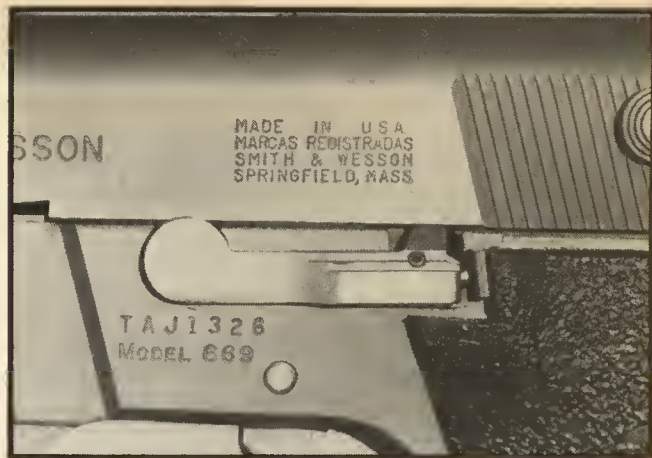
Each one of the three is available in a reduced-size version. The Smith & Wesson 59 is reduced as the 469 and 669, the Beretta mini-gun is called the 92FC (for "compact"), and the small SIG-Sauer is the 225. The availability of a smaller gun is a big sales feature to an agency looking to arm both uniformed and plain-clothes officers.

In the S&W 9mmPs, there's a lot of variation available. We initially identified the guns as the Model 59, but that's a bit of an oversimplification. There are actually six different guns in the series. They are the Models 439 and 639, eight-shot pistols with thinner single-column magazines in alloy and stainless steel frames respectively; the Models 469 and 669, reduced-size pistols with double-column twelve-shot magazines in the same two frame metals; and the 459 and 659. These latter models are the ones that will find their way most commonly to the policeman's holster: fourteen-shot double-column magazines in a choice of light alloy frame or stainless steel.

Only S&W offers the stainless steel feature. With proper lubrication, stainless steel is a worthwhile option to consider. Although there is a bit more expense involved, the stainless steel gun is easier to maintain and won't ever require refinishing. It's most desirable place is in the holster of a policeman who subjects the gun to the ravages of salt air in coastal police jurisdictions. It also has a fair amount of value to cops in humid areas where sweat tends to rust a blued steel gun.

The S&W lineup offers several additional variations in fixed and adjustable sights and ambidextrous safety levers. Further, you can get twenty-shot magazines for the double-column magazine guns: 469, 669, 459 and 659. These magazines are a worthwhile option. While these twenty-shotters are long enough to protrude from the base of the pistol's butt, they can be carried in a spare pouch against the possibility of a protracted battle. SWAT teams and like groups might find them most useful, but plain ol' street cops might also want to hide one away in the back of the patrol case.

*This long magazine is a high quality device, offered by the gun manufacturer. Beware of cheap imitations; there are many available. Twenty shots on tap may provide a distinct advantage in some of the wilder circumstances.*



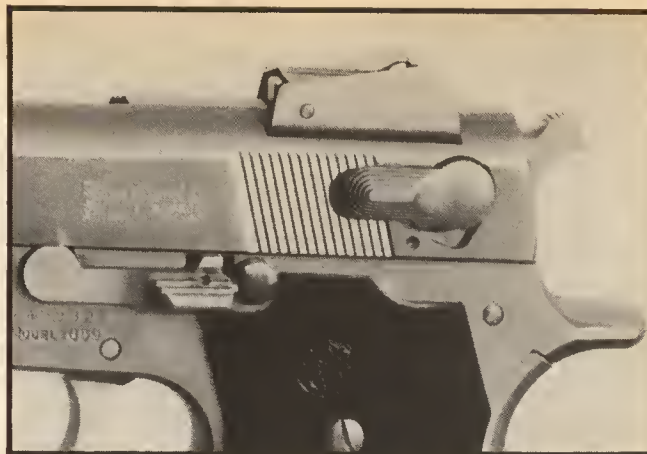
*The first digit of the designation is a 6 and in the S&W designation system, that means the gun is made from a form of stainless steel. A pistol intended for police use has a marked, rust-resistant advantage over competitors.*

*Another advantage of many 9mmPs in general, and this Smith & Wesson 659 in particular, is the extra-long and little-known high capacity magazine. As seen here, they stick out of the butt of the pistol when locked in place.*



The trigger and safety system of the S&Ws is typical double-action, with a manually operated safety and de-cocking lever. This means that the shooter inserts a magazine in the pistol and runs the slide forward to chamber a round. This leaves the hammer cocked. To lower it, the shooter strokes the lever downward which drops the hammer, then back up to pop the trigger to the forward, double-action position. There's another downward movement required to set the manual safety. In this condition, the pistol is quite safe to carry. To fire, the safety must be stroked upwards and the trigger pulled through a long double-action arc. The only criticism is the one most commonly heard from the traditional Colt shooters: the upwards to fire movement of the safety is damned awkward.

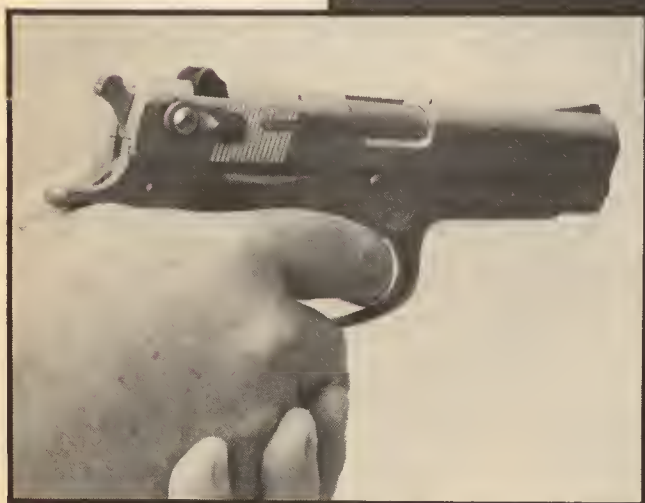
The Smith & Wessons also have another feature which some authorities have criticized. There's an internal safety which de-activates the firing mechanism when the magazine is removed from the gun. This idea may be more appealing to some than to others, but it is unquestionably a further complication.



*In this close-up photo, the controls of the S&W Model 659 are visible. The slide lever's a combined safety and de-cocking device. Note rear sight: sturdy, rather bulky.*



*For many, the Beretta has an edge in the sense that it was chosen as the U.S. service pistol. It won over the S&W and the SIG-Sauer, but not by a wide margin.*



*For those officers who have problems with the grip of a bulky gun, S&W offers the gracefully slim Model 39 pistols in both blue steel and stainless steel variations.*

The Smiths are generally fine handguns, widely used in the United States by several hundred police agencies and many individual officers who are given a choice. The butt sections of the high capacity gun are pretty thick, but there's a pleasant option available in the more gracefully shaped 39-series guns with their eight-shot magazines.

One of the S&W's major competitors is the Italian-designed Beretta Model 92. This pistol has a history that dates to the early post-war period. The single-action version of the pistol has been extensively used by the Israelis. It is a sturdy, well made handgun that enjoys the position of having been selected as the new U.S. service handgun.



While the selection procedure used by U.S. Army personnel has been criticized in some quarters and the air is currently (early 1987) filled with acrimony on the matter, the fact remains that the 92F is a good pistol capable of excellent performance.

The Beretta is a double-action, alloy frame, steel slide pistol using a fifteen-shot magazine. The sights on the pistol are a fixed front and drift-adjustable rear highlighted with luminous dots that work quite well. The safety lever, mounted on the slide, acts as a decocking lever in the same way as the one on the Smith. It is repeated on the right side of the slide for left-handed users. In line with the ambidextrous philosophy, the magazine catch is user-reversible.

One of the most engaging features of the Beretta is the open-topped slide. The five-inch 92 barrel is exposed for the majority of its length, rather than being enclosed in the manner of countless other automatic pistol designs. This is a huge advantage in the sense that there's nothing for a round being ejected from the pistol to catch on; no stovepipes.

Every effort was made to create a safe pistol when the 92 was put together. A passive firing pin safety interferes with the linkage in the firing pin itself so that the pistol cannot fire unless the trigger is pulled. The complications created by all of this hardware don't add anything to the smoothness of the trigger pull, but it remains usable.

The third of the 9mmP autoloaders that we'll examine is the product of a joint Swiss-German design team. The SIG-Sauer 226 is also part of a family of similar handguns. Both the 220 and 225 preceded the 226; they are full-sized and compact single-column guns respectively. The 225 is a particularly appealing gun. Prized by its users for that intangible "Feel" that makes a gun popular, the 225 is a fine concealed-carry handgun.



*Controls of the Beretta, ready to fire. The lever pivots down to safe and that is backwards to those trained in the cocked-and-locked school of combat pistol shooting.*

But the fifteen-shot 226 is the SIG-Sauer that will make it to the duty holsters of the street cops. It is also an alloy-framed pistol with a double-column magazine. The 226 has a different type of control or lockwork system.

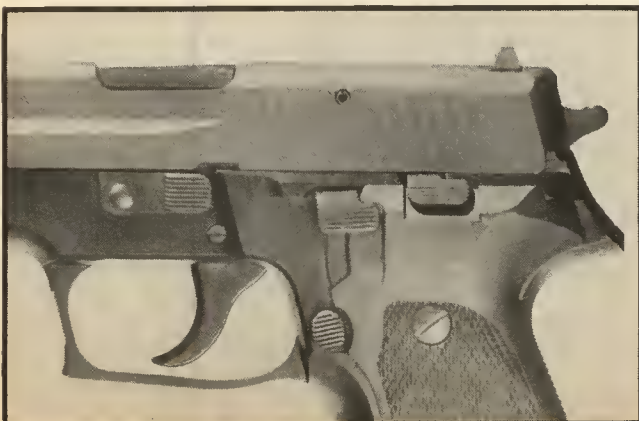
The left side of the 226 has a pair of levers: one is a conventional slide stop but the other is different. It is a decocking lever and that is the only function that it performs. If the hammer of the pistol is cocked and the officer wishes to lower it on a chambered round, he strokes the lever downward. This renders the pistol completely safe from accidental discharge. In this system, the designers have managed what amounts to total tactical simplicity.

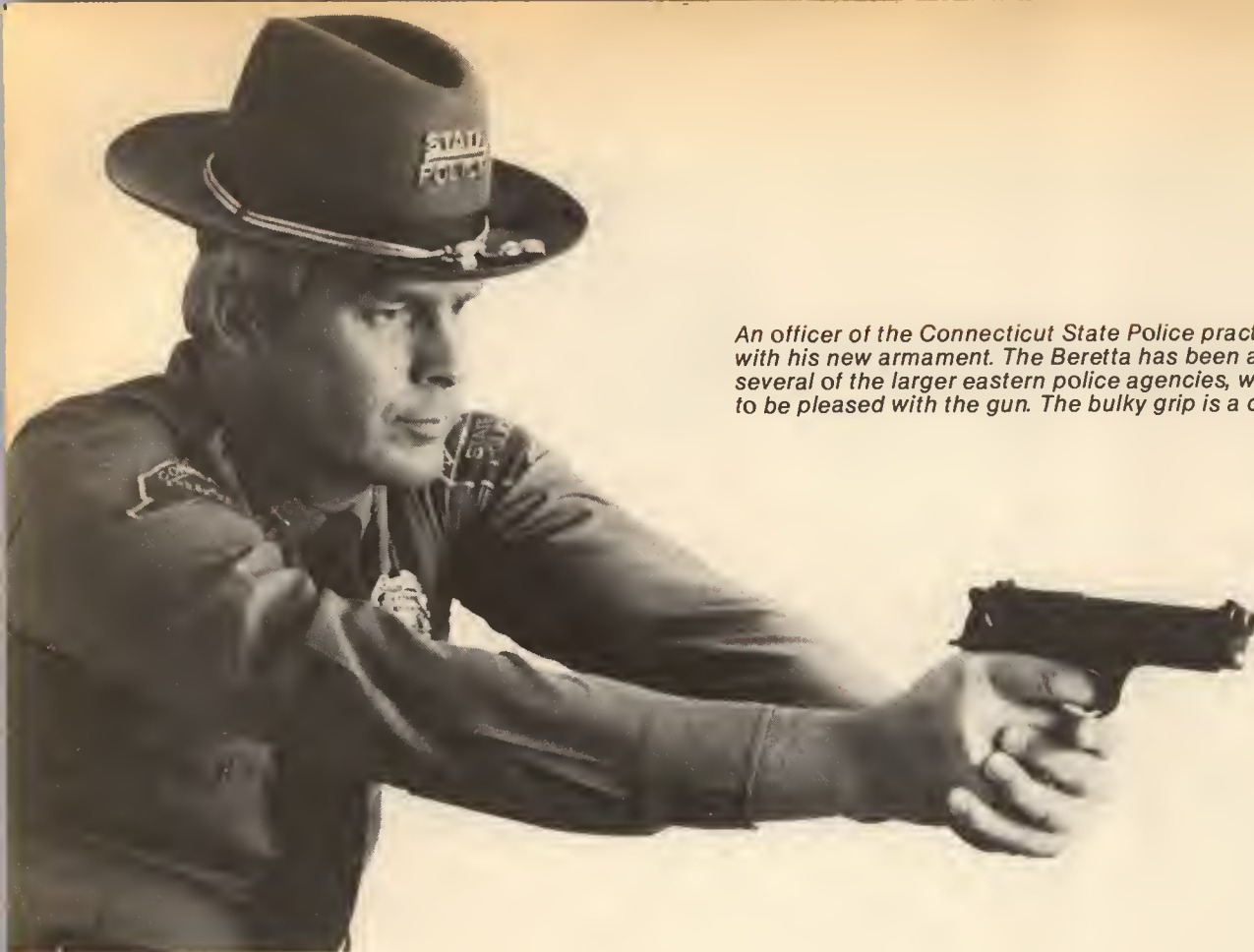
Since the firing pin is blocked from striking the primer until the pulling of the trigger removes a block, the 226 is extremely easy to teach. Safety is contingent on pulling the trigger, regardless of the position of the hammer. And the trigger pull, either way, is quite good.



*The redoubtable SIG-Sauer Model 226, an advanced combat handgun. The chief advantage lies in the safety and simplicity of the operating system.*

*The rear-most lever on the 226 is a slide stop and the foremost is for takedown. The central lever has but one function — it de-cocks the hammer. Safety is internal.*





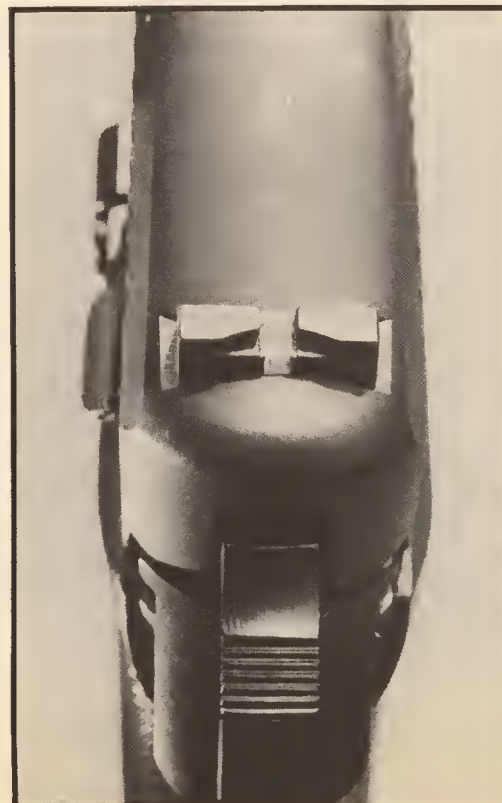
*An officer of the Connecticut State Police practicing with his new armament. The Beretta has been adopted by several of the larger eastern police agencies, who seem to be pleased with the gun. The bulky grip is a concern.*

All three of the 9mmP handguns contending for the police market have sights that are easy to see and shoot with; all three are easy to manage in rapid fire. They are also acceptably accurate guns, grouping decent ammunition under three inches at twenty-five yards.

But they each have strengths and weaknesses that we should mention. The stainless steel Smith & Wessons have a big advantage because of the material used in building them, but a disadvantage in the fact that a stainless steel front sight tends to blend into the target and background. The number of variations in the S&W line, as well as the ready availability of parts and service, makes them appealing. The thick butt of the double-column S&W contributes to a boxy somewhat awkward feel that small-handed users won't care for.

Policemen or women won't be particularly pleased with the bulk of the Beretta, either. Though that pistol isn't unacceptably heavy, it is a pretty bulky handgun. The big pluses on the side of the Beretta are the open slide and the functioning luminous sights. The trigger system is about as smooth as the Smith & Wesson's. Both brands are at least partially ambidextrous, with safety/de-cocking levers on both sides of the slide.

*One of the best rear sights that you will ever see is on the SIG-Sauer pistols. The rear sight notch is shaped to be always in shadow: always a clean, well-defined notch.*



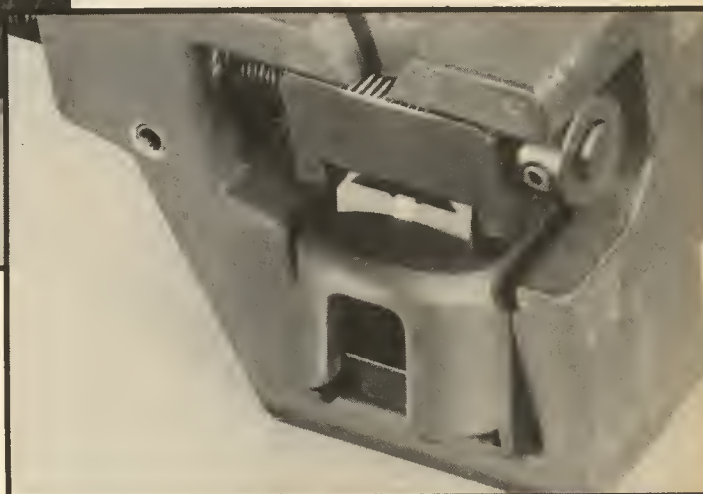




*The 226 has an advantage in the means of adjusting the sights. Left: 226 front sights are available in a choice of heights. Below: adjusting for windage or changing a front sight completely with the company's sight pusher.*



*Rear sight changes and adjustments are possible with a rear sight pusher. The above photo shows the range of available sights and the pusher. For a large department, the armorer could work with each officer to get his gun zeroed for the duty ammunition. Once set, there's no reason to change the clean, low-mounted, superb sights.*



*Above: The rear sight pusher at work. A T-handle, not visible in this photo, moves the rear sight laterally in its dovetailed notch. Service armorers used to use the same system for match-conditioned Colt .45 ACP pistols.*

There's no apparent effort to build a southpaw's pistol in the SIG-Sauer, but this is a good gun nevertheless. The strong points of the 226 are the smoothness of the trigger and the simplicity of the operating drill. Also, the sights on the 226 and its brethren are probably the best of the bunch. They are sharply defined rear notches and clearly seen front sights in sort of a combination ramp/Patridge shape. In an unusual touch, both front and rear sights are adjustable for windage. Elevation changes are made by replacing the entire sight with one of a different height. This is a practical solution to adjusting the sights of a handgun for the eyes of the using officer. It's a lot easier with the tools that the company manufactures.

Unquestionably, the trend in automatic pistols for law enforcement use is in the field of 9mmPs. They are perceived by the decision-makers as more desirable for a number of reasons. The 9mmP cartridge dates back to the

turn-of-the-century era; it's reliable and available in a wide variety of loadings; people learn to handle it easily and you can stuff a lot of shots into those cavernous magazines.

But there are others who contend that the way to go is with another elderly cartridge, the .45 ACP. That one was good enough for four major wars and countless imbroglios of lesser stature. In the typical .45 cartridge, you get about twice the bullet weight as in the typical 9mmP. You'll have a hefty increase in bullet cross-sectional area, but about a twenty to twenty-five percent reduction in velocity. And there's no way you'll get as many rounds of .45 ammunition into a fully loaded magazine. Nevertheless, the .45 round persists and new guns are being introduced for it.



*Frontrunning 45s. These three pistols constitute the available range of police pistols in the man-stopping .45 ACP caliber. From the left: Colt M1911A1 (Combat version), S&W 645 and SIG-Sauer 220.*



The newest is one of three .45s currently available and suitable for law enforcement purposes. The pistol is the Smith & Wesson Model 645. This new stainless steel handgun from the Springfield plant is similar to the company's line of 9mmPs. It differs in that it is a little bigger and has a single-column magazine which holds eight shots. The operating drill is the same as in the 9mmP pistols and the sights are pretty much the same, although the first production guns delivered had the red ramp front sight. Matched to the white-outlined black rear sight, the sights are better than those on the smaller guns.

The police department of Montebello, California, was one of the first agencies in the nation to adopt the 645. They are extremely happy with the gun, reporting signifi-

*Smith & Wesson's newest is the Model 645, a completely new pistol derived from the 9mmP series. Chambered for the powerful .45 ACP round, it has been well recieved.*





*Montebello Police officers at work in the Department's basement range. This small West Coast police agency was one of the first to use the new Smith & Wesson. They have been pleased with the results.*



cant improvement in qualification scores. Most of the officers also state that the pistol is much easier to manage in rapid-fire situations, that it doesn't twist around in the manner of other .45s. Unquestionably, the 645 sits higher in the hand than the Colt .45, but the pistol points and handles well. And it *does* handle recoil better.

The Smith & Wesson 645 is a thoroughly modern pistol, made from the best of materials and designed with safety and usability in mind. In this respect, it is much like the newer versions of the SIG-Sauer 220.

Early production 220 .45s — those available up until this year — had a significant flaw from a tactical standpoint. That flaw was the position of the magazine catch. In the butt of the pistol, the magazine catch was manipulated

*SIG-Sauer's latest pistol, the 220, is actually an updated version of their first gun. The main difference is in the position of the magazine catch on the left side of frame.*



*Although the main difference between the new and old 220s, left and right respectively above, is the placement of the magazine catch, there is also a difference in the contour of the butt. Rounded shape of the newer pistol is easier and quicker to manage in fast double-action firing. It makes a better gun.*

by the non-shooting hand. The newer .45 pistols are improved in that the catch has been moved up to the junction of the trigger guard and the frame on the left side of the pistol.

Other features of the 220 are like 225 and 226. Sights are essentially the same, as is the splendid de-cocking lever system. Since the frame of the .45 220 is made of alloy, the gun is fairly light. It's easier to carry, but there is a fair amount of felt recoil.

Throughout the discussion of the foregoing 45s there have necessarily been references to the boss, the first and arguably best of them all — the venerable Colt Government Model. Many thousands of Colts are currently in use with the nation's policemen. Despite the lack of a modern double-action trigger system or a high capacity magazine, the Colt rolls on with every indication of being around until the turn of the century.

Colt has updated a number of features of the old gun in recent times. You can buy one with the advantages of stainless steel construction. The minuscule sights that cursed the gun for so long are replaced on several models with high-visibility, square-notch types. The Colts now are getting a factory ramp job to improve feeding reliability. You can get them in a wide variety of sizes and shapes. Plus,

above all other factors, there is the simple fact that the Colt is about as fast an automatic pistol to use in an emergency situation that you'll ever find.

Carried cocked-and-locked (hammer back and safety lock up) the Colt requires a downward sweep of the thumb in the natural drawing motion to ready it for firing. This is fast — and the available trigger pull for the first and following shots is the same: a clean, crisp break. Policemen who choose the Colt are well armed.

There's a final point that needs to be made strongly to any officer or agency contemplating the use of automatics for law enforcement service. The essential heart of the system which makes a self-loading pistol perform is the magazine. All kinds of hellishly undesirable circumstances await the police officer who fails to note that his magazines are in poor shape. Magazine lips must be as they left the factory, free of burrs or dents or cracks. Using such a damaged magazine in a shooting situation will likely cause a jam. So will poor maintenance of any auto pistol. Autos must be clean and properly lubricated, as their functioning depends on major parts moving against each other. There's no reason why this cannot be done and when it is, the modern automatic pistol will serve well.

But no automatic has the advantage of a second pull of





*The Colt as customized for police service: S&W sights, long trigger, flat mainspring housing and custom grips.*

the trigger, cycling a fresh round into the path of the falling hammer. That's the province of the revolver. Having promised that we wouldn't initiate the revolver-automatic controversy once again...well, how about leaving it at that?

There are plenty of good cops working with plenty of good automatic pistols. And it is pretty certain that there will be more in the future.



*Magazines need to be like these from Smith & Wesson: in excellent condition, with no cracks, dents, burrs or other deformities. The pistol must also be carefully and correctly lubricated. Stainless steel is a special problem.*



*The Smith & Wesson 645 is a stainless gun that demands special attention. It must be clean and lubricated with a lube especially formulated for this application.*

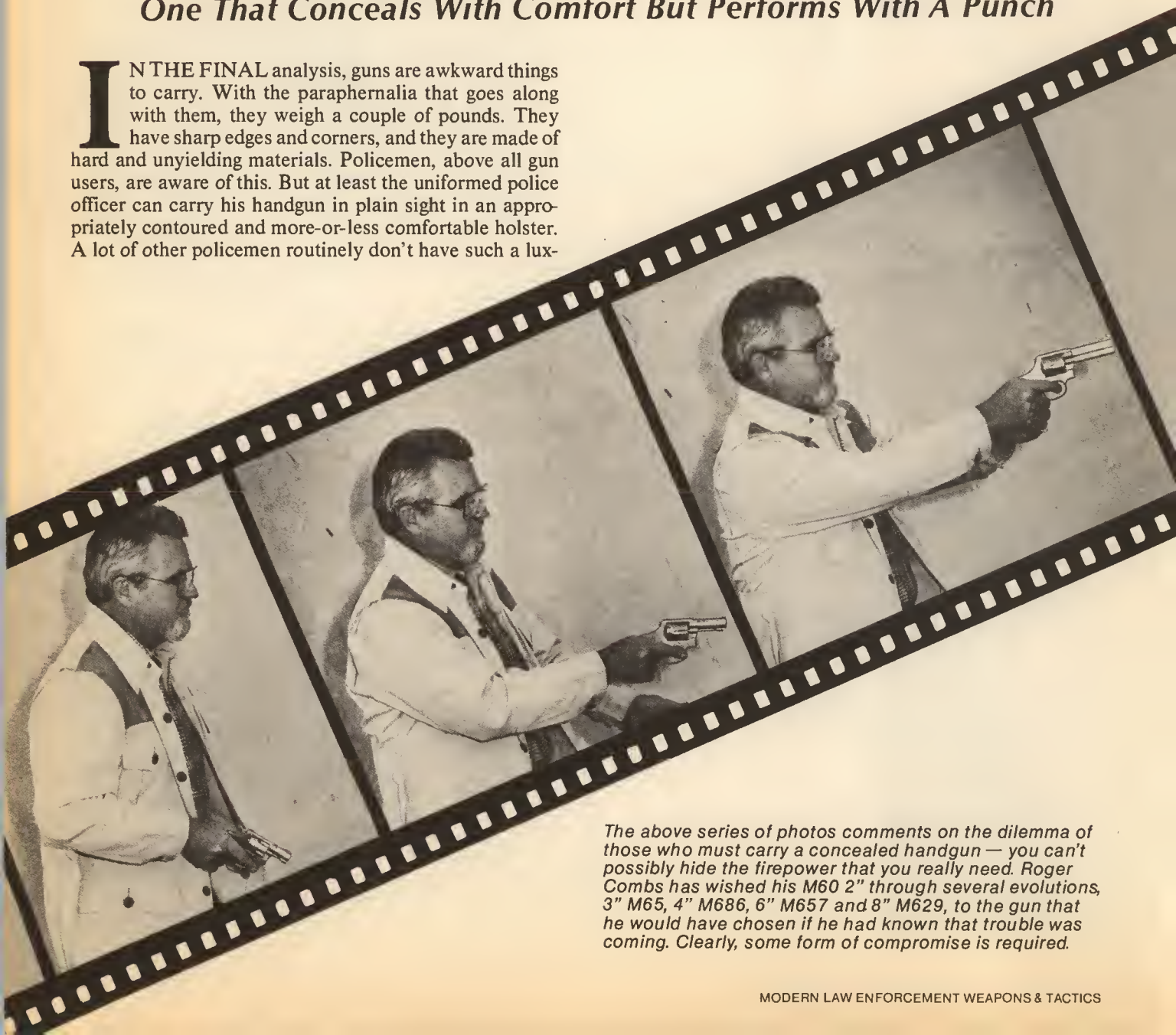


## CHAPTER THREE

# HIDDEN HANDGUNS

*A Long, Long Look For A Short, Short Gun —  
One That Conceals With Comfort But Performs With A Punch*

**I**N THE FINAL analysis, guns are awkward things to carry. With the paraphernalia that goes along with them, they weigh a couple of pounds. They have sharp edges and corners, and they are made of hard and unyielding materials. Policemen, above all gun users, are aware of this. But at least the uniformed police officer can carry his handgun in plain sight in an appropriately contoured and more-or-less comfortable holster. A lot of other policemen routinely don't have such a lux-



*The above series of photos comments on the dilemma of those who must carry a concealed handgun — you can't possibly hide the firepower that you really need. Roger Combs has wished his M60 2" through several evolutions, 3" M65, 4" M686, 6" M657 and 8" M629, to the gun that he would have chosen if he had known that trouble was coming. Clearly, some form of compromise is required.*



ury. These are the policemen who work in plain clothes and who must carry their handgun out of sight, in lightweight holsters and close to their skin.

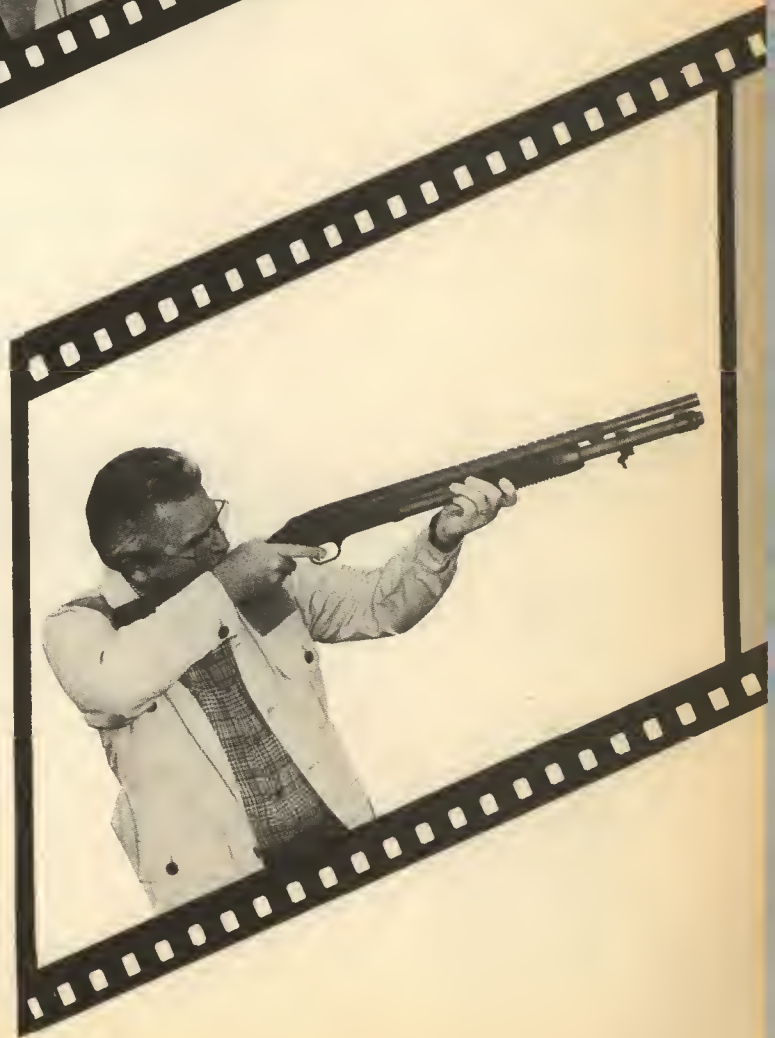
The plainclothes officer goes armed on the business of his department dressed in typical business attire; suit or sport coat and slacks. Some detectives, who work in assign-



ments that require them to pretend to be the bad guys, also might have to hide their handguns, but inside clothing that is like that worn by the criminals with whom they must mingle. They have special problems in concealing guns.

Some police agencies recognize the special problems of officers that work in notably high crime areas, spots where the possibility of shooting incidents is common. In these locations or anywhere, for that matter, where it is allowed by departmental regulations, some policemen will carry a second gun. Typically, that gun is concealed.

And finally, there is the problem common to law enforcement work everywhere, the problem that makes the police service so different from the work of brain surgeons or bricklayers. Policemen are required, by custom, common sense, and usually regulations, to be policemen twenty-four hours a day. In the case of an emergency, the off-duty policeman is required to respond — which means he might need a gun. It's a sensible policy, and one has to wonder how many people might have lived if one of the patrons of that MacDonalds in San Ysidro had been an armed, off-duty policeman.

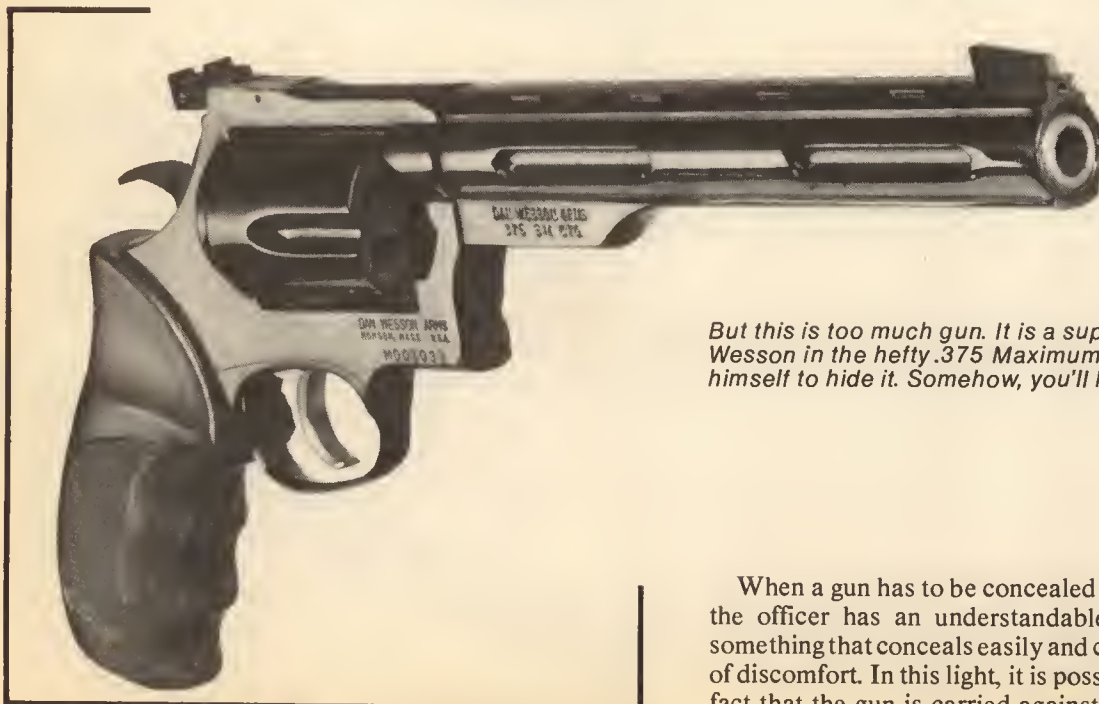


*It might vary a bit from one place to another, but there is ample logic for carrying an off-duty gun. All of these 9mmPs are good choices. From the top: S&W 469, S&W 547 and an ASP, a custom automatic based on the S&W Model 39. All of these guns are well suited for the role of concealed-carry or off-duty firearms. There're all in 9mmP chambering and that's fine — right up until you're faced with a situation where you would prefer more gun.*

On the ugly side of things, there's another argument for carrying guns in an off-duty situation. The possibility is quite real that a disgruntled arrestee or other person who has been dealt with in a displeasing way by a particular policeman will run across the same officer when the cop is not working. The man might take the opportunity to settle old accounts. It's best that the policeman go armed.

All of which brings us around to the inescapable conclusion that many different policemen need to carry handguns all the time. Since this means that the handgun carried needs to be selected with care, we will spend some time discussing the choices in concealable handguns. The considerations will vary a bit with the purpose: plainclothes officer carry, second gun for a uniformed officer, or the off-duty gun for any officer.


Before progressing to a systematic discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the various handguns, let's have an understanding about certain principles that are universal when a policeman goes about selecting a handgun to carry concealed. The first of these is simply an updated reiteration of the Robert Ruark African philosophy which grew into one of his better books, *Use Enough Gun*.



*But this is too much gun. It is a superb revolver, a Dan Wesson in the hefty .375 Maximum. It would take Goliath himself to hide it. Somehow, you'll have to compromise.*

When a gun has to be concealed on an officer's person, the officer has an understandable tendency to choose something that conceals easily and carries with a minimum of discomfort. In this light, it is possible to lose sight of the fact that the gun is carried against the real possibility of





*guys just give up and carry the same gun for all  
Smith & Wesson Model 66 with Jordan Troopers  
well suited for duty holster and off-duty purposes.*

The nature and extent of an officer's training is also an important factor in selecting a concealable handgun. If a man were to spend ten or twelve years working as a patrolman, armed with a heavy revolver, then it isn't reasonable to expect that he can transition easily to using a small automatic when he moves to a plainclothes assignment. This is more true than you would think in that most policemen are not really ardent gun buffs. While the size of an

This last argument might need a bit of amplification. If a policeman is well-trained and competent with, say, a Colt Python revolver, he tends to become comfortable with that gun. Assume that he goes to an assignment in civilian clothes and ends up armed with a Walther PPK. If he has sufficient intelligence and dexterity to work in the police field in the first place, then he has the ability to learn his new armament as well as his old.

## MODERN LAW ENFORCEMENT WEAPONS & TACTICS



*Superb revolvers all! These stainless steel Smith & Wesson revolvers all shoot .38-size slugs and will last forever with minimal care. All three are concealable. From left, Model 60, Model 686 (in rear), Model 65.*

The officer who had to argue long and hard to get the right to carry a different handgun should understand that the police administrator who has to live with the adverse possibilities can make a pretty good case for requiring that he carry a smaller version of the basic gun with which he was trained.

In similar fashion, the same argument can be made for restrictions on the gun that policemen are required or allowed to carry off-duty. The possible use of that gun is likely more remote, but the use is far more likely to be in the

course of an all-out, full-scale emergency. This is not a time for a man to be trying to remember which way the little lever on the slide turns in order to get the pistol to ready status.

Whatever concealed-carry handgun is chosen, for whatever purpose, there's no way it should ever be used without the user being thoroughly aware of the gun's handling characteristics. He needs to be totally competent in the gun's use. Further, he should be a reasonably skilled marksman with the piece.

*Whatever off-duty handgun is chosen, the officer must learn to use it with a skill equal to his duty gun. This is particularly important if the chosen pistol operates differently. The H&K P7 is hard to get used to.*





*Really tiny little guns, like this nifty little Sherry, are a delight for some purposes. They are not well suited for the defensive role — .22 long rifles aren't man-stoppers.*



I know of a major police agency in California which has a rigid policy with respect to the armament of its uniformed officers. They must carry a Colt, S&W or Ruger double-action .38 Special or .357 magnum revolver with a four- or six-inch barrel. The plainclothes officers of the same agency are allowed a bit more latitude; they can have barrels as short as two inches. Realistically, this agency says that the off-duty gun can be anything that the officer desires, *as long as the officer can qualify on the same course as with his duty gun.* This is a sensible policy that concedes to the individual whims of the troops.

It also results in a quizzical circumstance wherein the officer might be better armed off-duty than on. If he chooses to go to the time, effort and expense to become competent with, say, a Colt .45 Commander, there's not the slightest doubt that he's better armed.

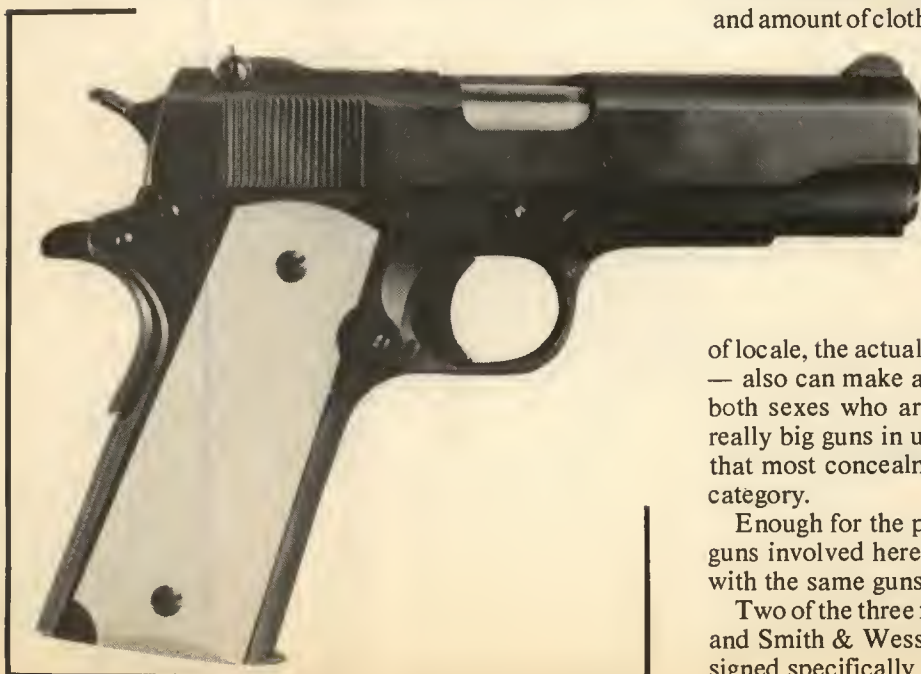
Despite the extensive analysis that can go into the selection of a concealed handgun, the basic criteria is still that it

be *concealable*. In this light, some really excellent guns are automatically ruled out under some circumstances. If the gun can't be hidden away in the setting where it will be used, then the argument for that particular handgun just stops.

Consider the female undercover officer working one of California's beach cities in the heat of the summer. Unless she relies on a purse the size of a duffel bag, it's not likely she can carry a long-barreled Smith & Wesson .44 magnum. On the other hand, I know of several burly male officers who have done just that — in shoulder holsters under loose Hawaiian shirts. This is no indictment of the small-statured female officer, but factual observation of the obvious.

Conversely, if the same small officer were to move to an assignment in the wintry streets of Chicago, she possibly would be able to carry a larger gun because of the weight and amount of clothing she'll likely be wearing. Regardless

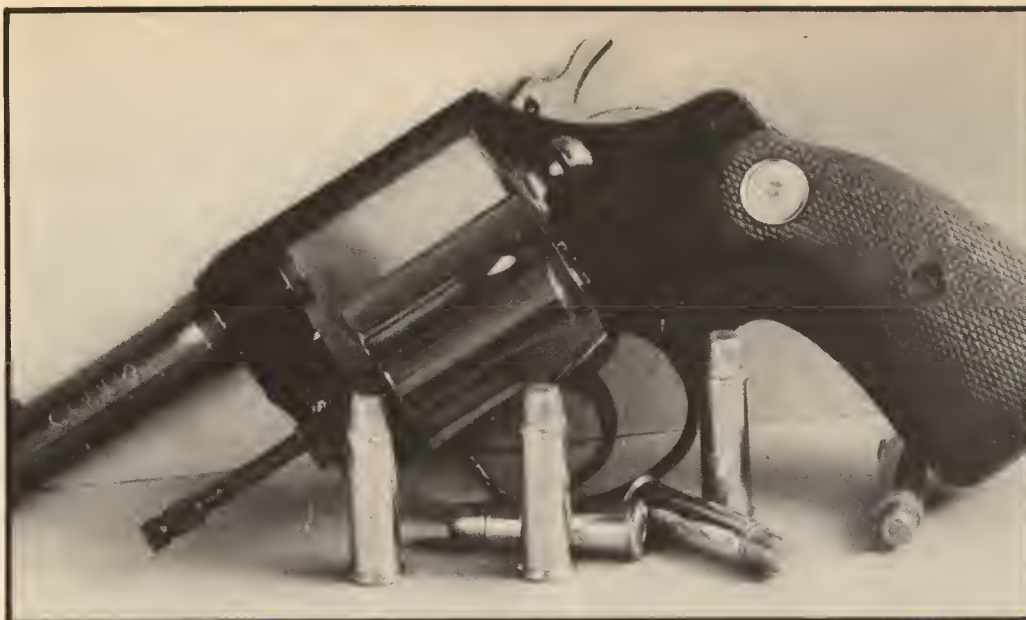
*Officers who just can't hide a revolver often turn to a flat autoloader. The Colt Combat Commander is one of the best, available in 9mmP, .38 Super and .45 ACP.*



of locale, the actual stature of the officer — male or female — also can make a difference. While there are people of both sexes who are sufficiently tall to hide away some really big guns in underarm rigs, the fact of the matter is that most concealment guns are in the mid-size to small category.

Enough for the philosophy. Let's talk about the actual guns involved here. There's no better place to start than with the same guns that started the book, the revolvers.

Two of the three major manufacturers of revolvers, Colt and Smith & Wesson, make small revolvers that are designed specifically for concealed-carry use.



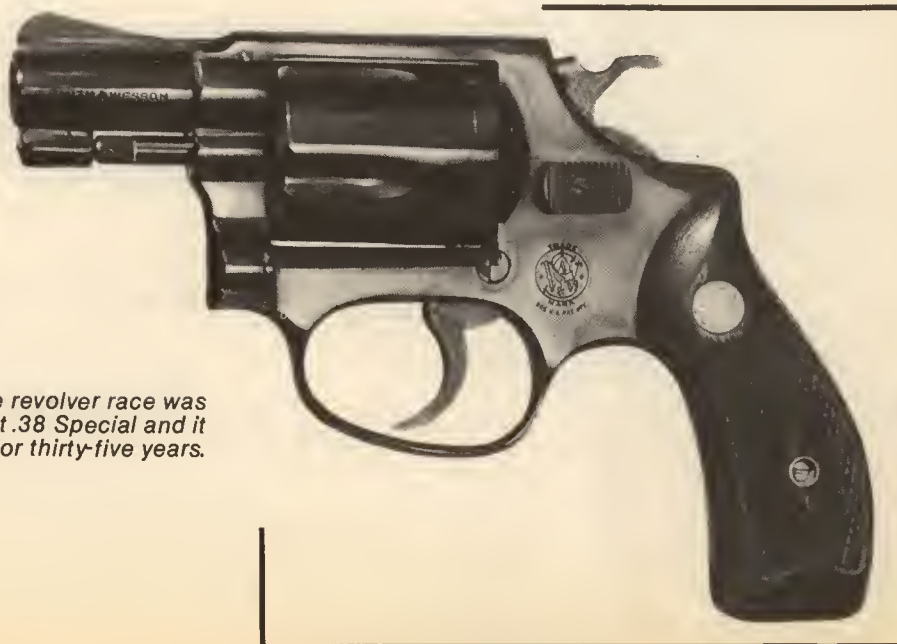
*You'll have to turn to the used-gun market to find one of these: a Colt Cobra with the three-inch barrel. It's a fine gun in .38 Special and has "...the all-important sixth shot."*

Colt has produced a series of small revolvers on the reliable "D" frame for many years. The variety in barrel length and other features used to be far greater than it is at the present time, but there are three basic guns from which to choose. The Detective Special is an all-steel revolver featuring a six-shot cylinder and an underlugged barrel for protection of the extractor rod. The Colt Commando Special is virtually the same handgun, but with a flat matte finish and smooth rubber stocks, unlike the checkered walnut type found on the Dick Special. There's also the Agent, with many of the same features as the Detective Special, except for an alloy frame and smaller walnut stocks.

Back in the Fifties, Colt used to make a lot of advertising hay out of the fact that their small-framed revolvers had

six-shot cylinders. It was left unsaid that the competitor, Smith & Wesson, used only five shots in their small "J" frame guns. In those days, Colt also offered a little more variety in their mini-revolvers, with more choice in barrel lengths, finishes and stocks. Old or new, short or long, the various small-frame Colts are excellent guns with a deserved reputation for quality.

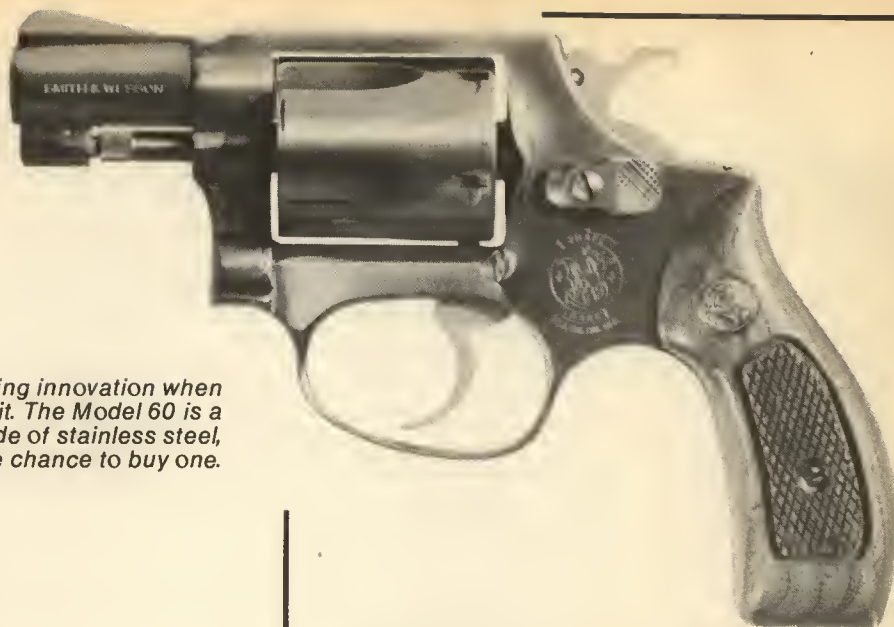
But so are the Smith & Wessons. The first of these was the famous Chiefs Special, built on the new "J" frame in the early 1950s. Since then, the Smith & Wesson factory has produced the basic five-shot .38 Special revolver in endless variations. A few of these have been discontinued, such as the late and much-lamented Centennial model in steel and alloy-frame versions, but most persist to the present day. The current S&W catalog displays the "J"



*Smith & Wesson's entry in the little revolver race was the Chiefs Special. It's a five-shot .38 Special and it has been coming from Massachusetts for thirty-five years.*



*This little revolver was an electrifying innovation when Smith & Wesson first introduced it. The Model 60 is a version of the Chiefs Special, made of stainless steel, and people used to fight to get the chance to buy one.*



frames in round and square butt versions, with two- and three-inch barrels, different stocks, blue or nickel-plated, and with alloy or carbon steel frames.

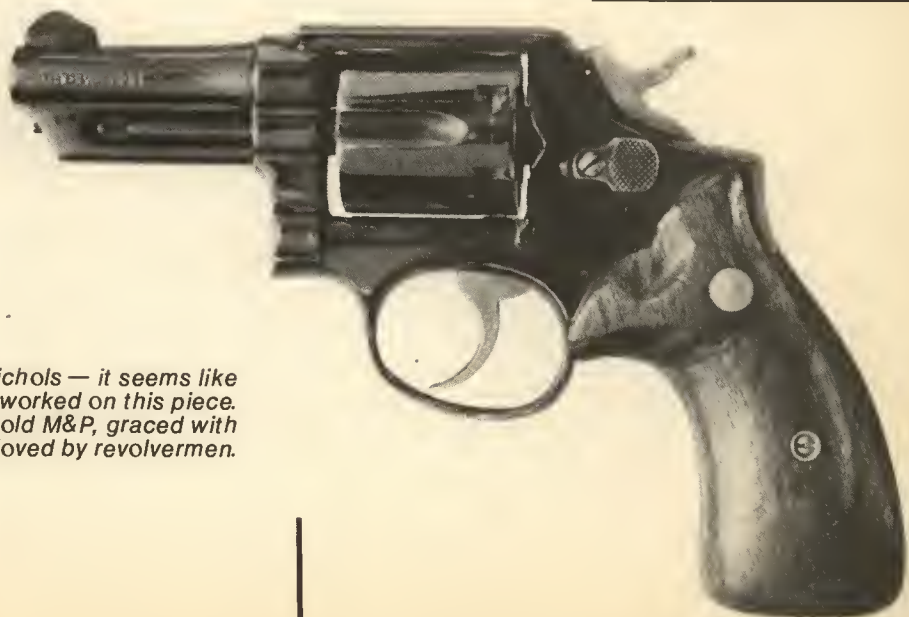
There are variations in the semi-shrouded hammer Bodyguard series and in the stainless steel Model 60s. From time to time, Smith & Wesson has offered special small runs of the guns with adjustable sights and alternative barrel lengths. Nearly any combination of features is available in a concealable .38 revolver from Smith & Wesson.

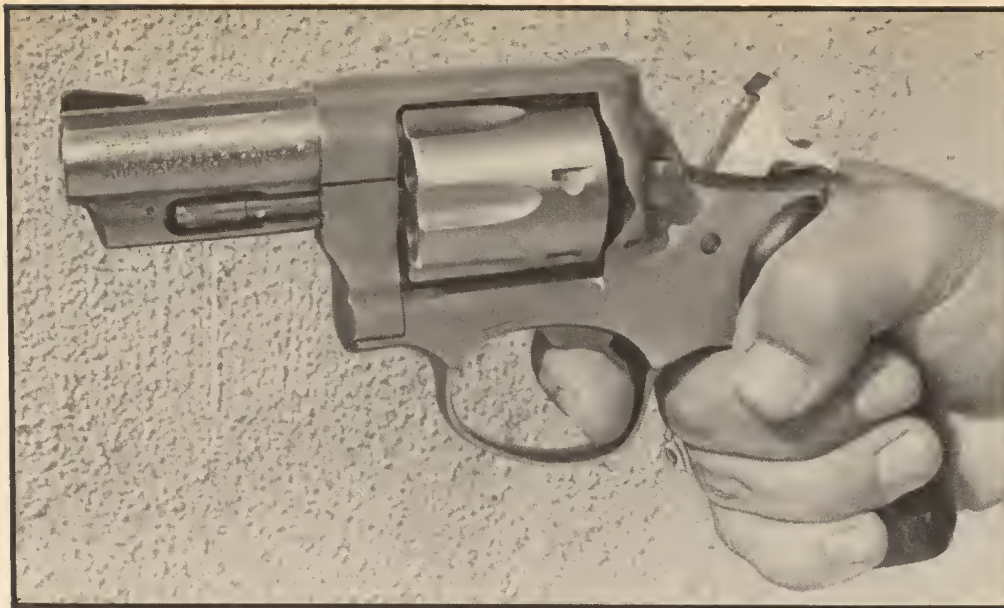
If the variety of small revolvers from Smith & Wesson is extensive, the choices available from them in the next size up, the "K" frames, is equally diverse. These are six-shot revolvers, available with 2-, 2½-, 3-, 4- and 6-inch barrels. Some of the guns in this series are made with barrels as long as 8¾ inches. Their use in law enforcement concealment roles is clearly limited. What is more significant

about the mid-frame Smiths, the "K" and newer, larger "L" frames, is the fact that the guns are made in both .38 Special and .357 magnum calibers. Again, there's a lot of variety in the Models 10, 12, 13, 15, 19, 64, 65, 67, 581, 586, 681 and (whew!) 686.

These latter guns are in the mid-frame revolver market and both Colt and Ruger offer strongly competing models. From Colt, there are variations of the "D" frame, offered with the heavily underlugged barrel style pioneered by the Hartford plant, and cataloged as the Diamondback. Colt also produces the larger Python in short- and medium-length barrels, suitable for concealment. The frontrunners in the Colt law enforcement line are the variations on the basic Mark V. These are the Trooper, Peacekeeper and flashy new King Cobra. None of these guns are small, but in their four-inch barrel versions, are fairly easy to conceal.

*DiLeo, Davis, Matthews, Curry, Nichols — it seems like half the gunsmiths in California worked on this piece. It is really nothing more than an old M&P, graced with the silky-smooth "long" action, beloved by revolvermen.*





*Ruger is the latest maker to get into the small revolver market. They used their basic medium frame, then rounded the butt and shortened the barrel: The Speed-Six.*

Sturm, Ruger is the newest of the major American handgun manufacturers and they have only entered the concealable law enforcement revolver market in recent times. In their medium-frame Speed-Six, Service-Six and Security-Six models, the Ruger people offer variations in barrel length (from 2¾ inches to six), blued or stainless steel, fixed or adjustable sights and with rounded or squared butt shapes. One of the more popular versions of the mid-frame Ruger line is the concealable Speed-Six, made with a short barrel, non-snagging fixed sights and

*A tall man, with plenty of reach between belt line and armpit, might be able to carry such a piece as this: an Outdoorsman, representative of the N-frame Smiths with six-inch barrels. It's just too much bulk for most cops.*



round butt. There are a lot of worthwhile design features on this gun.

While other smaller makers may, from time to time, offer other competing designs, the market is pretty well covered by the aforementioned small- and medium-frame guns from the big three manufacturers.

This is not to say categorically that there are no other revolvers suitable for concealed carry, or that larger revolvers cannot be concealed under some circumstances. There are times when some of our larger officers might be able to duplicate the gun-carrying exploits of Clint Eastwood in the *Dirty Harry* flicks. This means hiding an "N" frame Smith & Wesson with six-inch barrel in a shoulder holster under a sport coat. That gun, in its leather rig, is sufficiently

long as to require a pretty tall person to hide it. There's a justly famous officer on the L.A.P.D. who carried a *pair* of long-barreled Smiths in just this fashion.

There are larger revolvers beyond the mid-frames which we've already discussed. Smith makes the massive "N" frames in a choice of bore sizes. Ruger makes the Redhawk revolvers in several calibers, but none with a barrel shorter than 5½ inches. These guns are all far too big to be effectively concealed by the majority of users, and we'll not dwell on their use.

Concealed revolvers offer some big advantages in the sense that there's such a wide variety of guns from which to make your choice, as well as the fact that revolvers are sim-



ple to operate and to transition to when the uniformed duty carry gun is also a revolver.

But all revolvers have a whopping disadvantage: They're thick. The smallest revolver is better than an inch thick across the cylinder. A comparable amount of firepower can be packaged far more attractively for concealed use. The resulting gun is, of course, the automatic pistol. With rare exceptions, automatic pistols are easier to carry concealed, because they are flatter. In fact, some automatics are routinely carried in rigs no more sophisticated than the waistband of a snug-fitting pair of trousers. Southwesterners have carried their Government Model Colts in this fashion for many years.

There is such an incredible variety of automatics on the market that discussing them in light of their suitability as concealed-carry guns is a hefty chore. It might be wise to begin by mentioning the automatics that are *not* generally concealable.

In recent times, there's been an effort to make the automatic pistol a high-tech, space-age, Magnum-with-a-capital-M performer. Invariably, this results in a handgun of the size and shape of the Wildey, Auto-Mag, Desert Eagle or other such behemoths. For their intended use in the field, these guns are impressive. The manufacturers are not going to have a lot of success in selling them to the cop who has to conceal one. They're just too damned big.

But there are not a great many of these big bruisers around and, when you rule them out, virtually all other modern automatic pistols in respectable calibers are worth considering. Since the discussion of revolvers began with Smith & Wesson, that's a logical place to begin when automatics are to be surveyed.

Except for the purely target guns, the Models 41 and 52, Smith & Wesson makes a selection of automatic pistols suitable for law enforcement carry. Until the company introduced the Model 645 in caliber .45 ACP, all of them were 9mmPs. In the portion of this book dealing with automatic pistols, we have already checked out the full-sized guns, the Models 439, 639, 459 659. While all of these guns are hefty fistfuls, they can usually be concealed.

*All of these older automatics were popular a few years ago. As concealed-carry guns they are still good choices if you can find one of them in .380, rather than .32 ACP. From the top: Colt Pocket Model, Model 51 Remington and Walther PPK. Only the fine Walther PPK survives to the present day.*



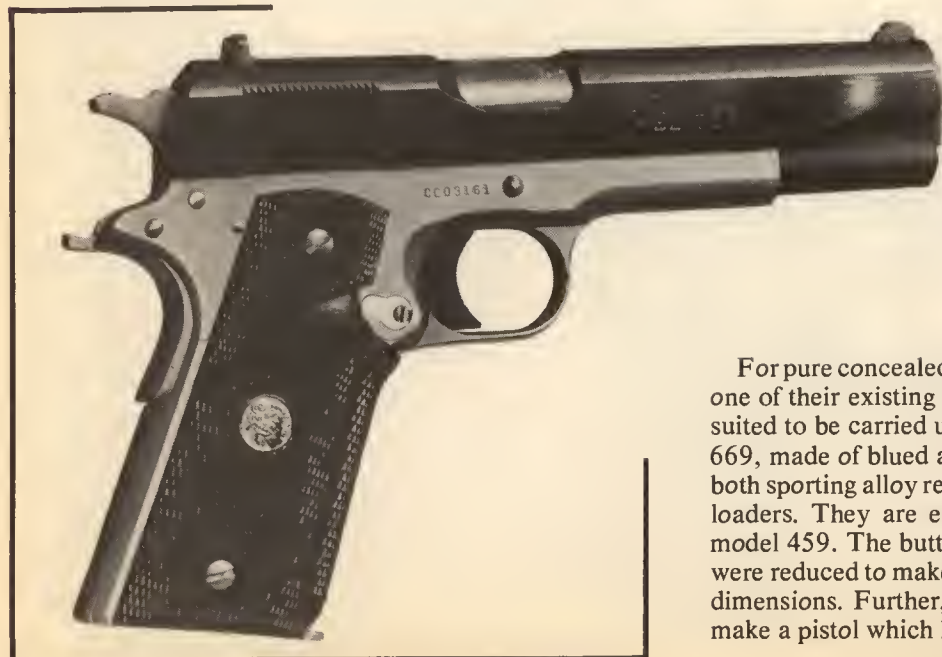


*This is one of the best of today's pocket automatics, a S&W Model 669. As a 9mmP, it's certainly more gun than the graceful .380s of yesteryear. Surprisingly, the only noticeable increase in dimensions is greater thickness.*



*Shooting Smith & Wesson's Model 645, you can't help but wonder how long it'll take the design people to chop one down to pocket-size. They should — this is S&W's newest combat pistol, a powerful 45 ACP.*

*Lots of these get stuffed away in waistbands of Levis and those who carry them are well armed. In a new set of clothes, the Colt .45 Government Model. This one is called a Combat Elite and it's seventy-five years old.*



For pure concealed-carry purposes, Smith has modified one of their existing designs into a handy automatic well suited to be carried under clothing. The Models 469 and 669, made of blued and stainless steels respectively, and both sporting alloy receivers, are twelve-shot 9mmP autoloaders. They are essentially cut-down versions of the model 459. The butt and slide/barrel sections of the gun were reduced to make a pistol significantly shorter in both dimensions. Further, the factory went to some length to make a pistol which has major contours rounded to resist



snagging. This idea is used on the corners of the rear sight, the controls on the left side of the slide and the hammer. Even the moulded plastic grips are shaped to partially shield adjacent protruding portions of the pistol.

Smith & Wesson's other automatic, their newest, is the Model 645. Compared to a Model 669, it is a pretty hefty pistol. But then it's a .45 ACP. The gun was covered in detail in Chapter Two of this book and we'll not go into a lot more detail. Since the pistol is large, there might be some question of how well it is suited for concealed carry. The police department for San Clemente, California, currently uses one handgun — the Model 645 Smith & Wesson. Every sworn officer of that agency uses a 645, whether his assignment is uniformed or not. You can make a pretty good case for the department's policy.

While Smith & Wesson offers an exceptionally broad line of revolvers intended for concealed carry, Colt's variety is greater when it comes to concealable automatics. Any discussion of Colt automatic pistols begins you-know-where. The Colt Government Model .45 caliber pistol is the most successful automatic pistol ever produced. Three-quarters of a century after the pistol was introduced, Colt is still making and selling them.

As a concealed handgun, the 45 is a little large, but since it is so flat, it works fairly well. You can buy a .45 in several variations: blue or stainless steel, with fancy sights as the Gold Cup; nickel-plated, even with some custom touches as the Combat Elite. If a seven-shot .45 magazine isn't

enough for you, GMs can be had with nine-shot magazines in 9mmP and .38 Super. Right after World War II, the basic pistol was shortened to create the Commander model and that's still around in several variations, with a barrel and slide three-quarters of an inch shorter than standard.

But the best of the concealable .45s is the newest from Colt. In the interests of creating a truly compact pistol, the maker took the basic pistol and shortened the butt portion of the receiver as well as the slide and barrel in such a way as to create a remarkable little handgun. The Officer's ACP is as much as fourteen ounces lighter than the 1911 version and tapes over an inch less in overall length. Incredibly, the magazine holds only one round less than the big .45s, six instead of seven. It is an excellent design update of the basic pistol. The sights on the Officer's ACP, as well as on several other versions of the newer Colts, are a vast improvement over the minuscule 1911 type.

Concurrent with the design of the newer .45s, Colt brought out a pair of .380 automatics, at least size-wise reminiscent of the Pocket Model .32s and .380s of the earlier years of this century. The first of these was the .380 Government Model, which has the look and operating characteristics of its big brother, the Government Model .45. The newest is the Mustang .380, shortened beyond the already small dimensions of the Government Model .380, to the point where the pistol is actually but a tiny bit larger than the vest pocket-sized .25 ACP automatics.

*The Mustang is a .380 automatic from Colt. It's available in either blue or the silvery Coltguard finish. This gun has the same operating drill as the larger .45, making it a natural as a back-up or off-duty handgun.*



*Not a lot is yet known about the P85, but it is a Ruger and that guarantees quality. The available samples show a lot of promise as a concealed-carry handgun: fifteen-shot magazine, double-action trigger, It's another 9mmP.*



Most authorities will concede that the .380 cartridge for which the Mustang is chambered is at the minimum acceptable power level for defensive use. The Mustang, itself, is probably as small a gun as you can produce for the cartridge; the combination of the gun and modern .380 ammo makes for a gun worthy of consideration.

Where the other major manufacturer is concerned, there has been nothing in the way of defensive centerfire automatics. Ruger did not get its corporate feet wet in this market until recently. As noted in the chapter on law enforcement autoloaders, Ruger has announced the production of a new 9mmP automatic pistol called the P85. The pistol has many of the characteristics of many of our modern automatics. The guns's dimensions are quoted in the company brochure and are small enough that the gun is clearly concealable. As this is written, however, they are not into full production and I was unable to get a sample to shoot and photograph.

The foregoing pretty well surveys the concealable revolver market and the domestic automatic pistol scene. If you infer from that statement that there are no acceptable revolvers from abroad, you are absolutely correct. There aren't. But there are a host of excellent automatics.

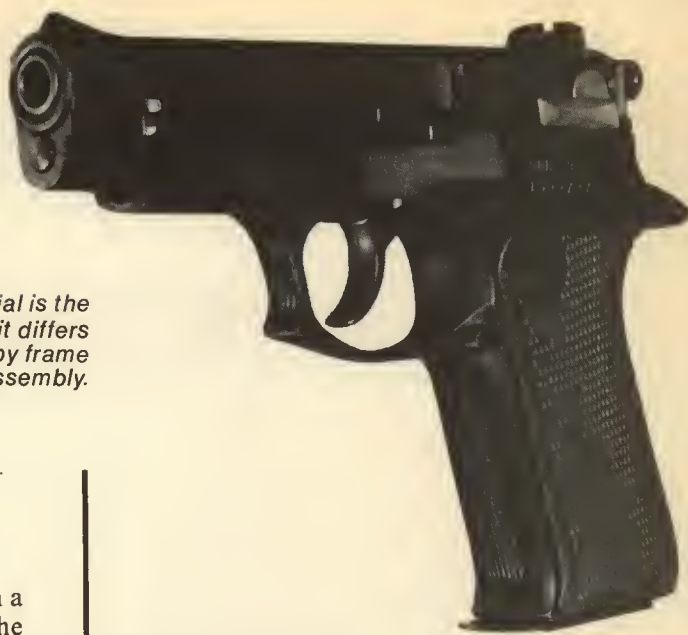
As was the case with the domestic full-sized service automatics, there are a lot foreign pistols that were intended primarily for military or police carry in a holster, but which are compact enough to be concealed under some types of clothing. As a matter of fact, most of them are in this category, with pistols the size of the Steyr GB or the H&K VP70z the only notable exceptions. Since there are so many of the foreign pistols, we'll not discuss them, unless they have a compact counterpart.



*The 9mmP round is well suited to double-column high-capacity magazines and this one takes the "most shots" honors with an eighteen-shot magazine. Beyond that, a Steyr GB is a well-made automatic with unique features.*



*Another 9mmP with concealed-carry potential is the Star Model 30PK. It's a fifteen-shot gun, but it differs from the plain Model 30 in that it has an alloy frame and a considerably shorter barrel and slide assembly.*



Our new service automatic, the Beretta 92F, is such a pistol. It has a compact version, called the 92FC, with the "C" designation meaning compact. In this handgun, the frame has been reduced in size by enough to require a shorter magazine, housing thirteen instead of fifteen cartridges. The barrel and slide have been similarly shortened and the resulting pistol is a bit more concealable. The same philosophy was used to produce the Spanish-made Star 30PK from the basic Star 30M. In this excellent pistol, the frame is changed to a weight-saving alloy from the basic steel. While the barrel and slide get shortened, the frame and magazine maintain the original dimensions. The 30PK is a sleeper of a handgun, with a host of features that deserve the attention of anyone looking for a carry gun in 9mmP.

Nowhere has this approach of "scale down the holster gun and make a carry piece" been pulled off with such credibility as in the SIG-Sauer handguns. We've already mentioned the high-quality service auto from the Swiss-

German consortium. The 220 and 226 pistols are among the world's best rough service handguns. The company also produces the 225, which is essentially a 220 in 9mmP, reduced in butt and barrel length to produce a blocky little winner. The 225 is offered only in 9mmP and with a single-column magazine. There *should* be a .45 version and there is going to be a new gun out soon with a higher magazine capacity.

Thus far in our survey of imported autoloaders for concealed carry, we have dealt with abbreviated versions of full-sized guns. There is another class of handgun, the true pocket autos, which are imported or designed overseas. Many of these are excellent pistols which have found their way to the waistband holsters of a lot of policeman.



*Short, blunt, chunky, businesslike — all common terms hung on the SIG-Sauer 225 by cops who first handle the piece. It has an ergonomically excellent grip, one that houses an old-fashioned single-column magazine of eight.*

*All four guns on these pages are .380s, a marginal but popular round. With good ammo, such as the Winchester Silvertip, it may be acceptable. The gun here is a PPK, one of the first successful double-action automatic pistols.*



One is the Walther PP or PPK series of pistols. This was the first commercially successful double-action autoloader. There are a lot of different versions of the gun and the best, at least for concealment purposes, is the new made-in-the-USA stainless steel version of the fifty-year-old pistol. It's small, it's available in rust-resistant stainless steel and it's chambered for the adequate .380 auto.

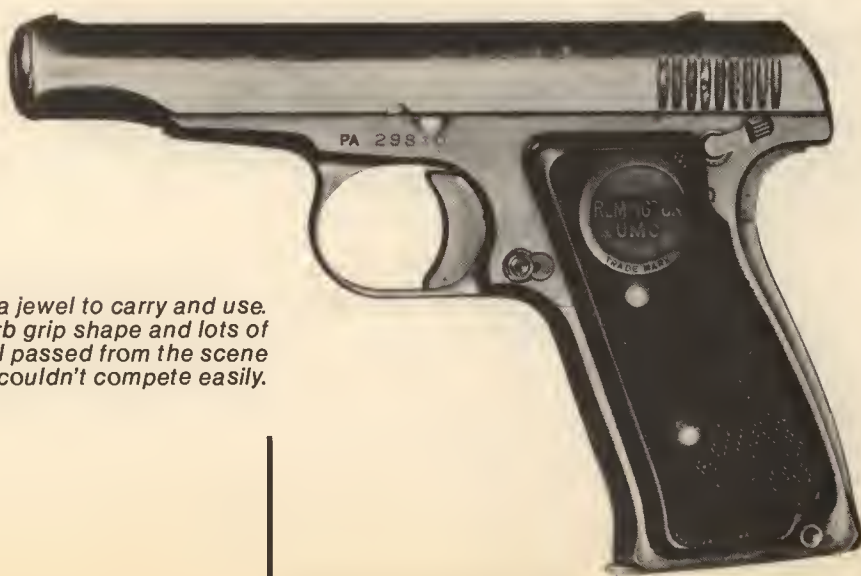
SIG-Sauer also produces a pocket auto in this class. It's called the 230. Again in .380, the 230 may be had in stainless or blued steel versions. While it is noticeably larger than the Walther PPK, the 230 is easy to conceal. It has one of the more simple sets of controls of any self-loading pistol. With an external hammer linked to a slide-mounted decocking lever, the shooter wipes the lever down and drops the cocked hammer safely on the round in the chamber. No other controls needed.

Yet another worthwhile European pocket-auto design is the Beretta Model 84 in .380 caliber. The pistol has an interesting open slide design much like the larger Model

92F. There are the usual variations in finish and you can get either double- or single-column magazines. The same pistol is marketed by FN, in the United States by Browning, as the BDA .380. All are good pistols.

Before we tie off this discussion of the imported pocket autos suitable for concealed use, one remaining pistol needs to be examined. From the Spanish firm of Star, we've already looked at a number of excellent handguns. Perhaps the best of them for our purposes here is the Star PD. This excellent little gun is a scaled-down version of the Government Model Colt, with all of the same handling characteristics. Best of all, the gun is a .45 — and that's hard to argue with.

There are lots of out-of-print handguns that deserve more space than I can give them here. Some of the older



*The Remington Model 51 was a jewel to carry and use. It was very flat, had a superb grip shape and lots of different features. The pistol passed from the scene because it was expensive and couldn't compete easily.*



*The pocket model Colt was made for many years and earned a good reputation. Like the Remington Model 51, the Colt was flat and concealable. The hammer was an internal one and there was a grip safety on the butt.*



Colts, like the Lawman Mark III, were excellent concealed-carry guns. That particular model had to be the ugliest brute ever to leave Hartford, Connecticut, but it worked. One of the prettiest was the Remington Model 51, a sleek and majestic little autoloader in .32 and .380. People who have them don't often give them up. Neither do the guys who own a hammerless pocket-model Colt.

Still, if you'll indulge a bit of personal favoritism at the end of a long discussion, there is a big gap in the Smith & Wesson line left by the cancellation of the Models 40 and 42. These were variations of the Chiefs Special, double-action only and fitted with a grip safety. Most of all, they were contoured to carry, with almost nothing to catch on clothes or gear. A smooth, slick, easy to handle little revolver, it's one that I'd lobby Smith & Wesson to return in stainless and with a three-inch barrel.

At the beginning of this chapter, we mentioned the use of a second or backup handgun by some police officers. Since the uniformed police officer has plenty to carry on an overloaded Sam Browne belt and the police administrator

isn't going to like the militant impression created by carrying a second handgun in the open, a back-up will likely be concealed. Certain of the guns already mentioned would serve the purpose well. And make no mistake about it, the purpose is a serious one. The second gun is carried by a great many policemen as a form of life insurance. Police administrators who make policy need to take this into account.

The smallest of the pocket autos, like the Walther PPKs and Colt Mustangs, are good guns for the job. So are some of the lightweight revolvers, like Model 37 Smiths or Colt Cobras. But there are a couple of brand-new guns on the American market that are going to be used heavily in this role.

*Beretta is making this handy .380 in several versions. The pistol is styled somewhat like the larger 92F and that's just fine, particularly where the open slide is concerned. All Berettas are known for their reliability.*



*.22s and .25s aren't man-stoppers, but they have some value as back-up guns. This class of handgun is one that will only be used in an all-out, last-resort situation. The Budischowsky TP-70 is a .25, a tiny fraction smaller than a Walther TPH in .22. The officer using such a handgun should make very sure that his gun functions flawlessly with the chosen ammunition. If it doesn't, then it's little more than a watchfob.*



*The Walther TPH shown here was one of the rare ones that were imported directly to an American policeman by Interarms. Since the pistol could only be brought in via this route, Interarms set up to make them here in this country. The TPH is quite small, but highly reliable.*





*One of the best ideas to come down the pike in a long time. The BJT DA derringer is a stainless steel, two-shot, double-action, break-open, high-quality handgun made in either .38 Special or 9mmP caliber. It is alone in its class — almost the ideal policeman's backup gun.*

BJT DA derringer. This little stainless steel gem is an over/under, two-shot, all double-action pistol chambered for the 9mmP or .38 Special. It is small enough to fit in the palm of the hand, but will deliver some 9mmP loads at speeds in excess of 1000 feet per second. Moreover, the gun is shaped to carry and to shoot. So is the COP, from the same maker. That one has four barrels and they're .357 magnums.

I suspect that more cops than you'd realize are carrying a backup gun. Many of them do so without comment. They are the ones who are streetwise enough to know that the world still has its onion fields.

One is the Walther TPH, a smaller rendition of the PPK. The guns have been imported under severe restrictions for several years, but the import bans of the Gun Control Act of 1968 are now moot. The TPH is now being made in the U.S. from stainless steel. This pistol is a natural in an ankle holster. It's a .22, marginal in stopping power, but one that all can afford to practice with endlessly.

The backup handgun is not carried with a view towards conducting a protracted gun battle, but rather against the possibility of an abrupt, life-threatening emergency that can't be resolved with other guns. In this light, consider the

*In the foreground of this photo, there is a COP. This is a chunky little brute of a handgun featuring four barrels of .357 caliber. It's one fine handgun, but a gun that never received the acclaim it well deserved. Other guns pictured are the BJT DA derringer, the Budischowsky TP-70 and the Walther TPH, all back-ups.*





## CHAPTER FOUR • • • • •

*Out On The Street, Marksmanship Really Means...*

# ...SHOOTING FOR SURVIVAL!

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**P**OLICE MARKSMANSHIP flourishes on ranges from one end of the land to the other. There are few police agencies that don't have a trophy case in the lobby and the case invariably holds a bunch of trophies. Usually, a high percentage of the trophies have a gold statuette on top, one that shows a police officer in the classic marksman's pose. Sometimes the pose is a Hollywood cowboy's "Gunfighter" crouch. You could infer that we place a high premium on the ability of police officers to use a gun.

It goes even farther. Many police departments place such importance on the officer's skill with firearms that they allow him to wear qualification badges as part of his uniform. There are even a few agencies that will pay an officer a few bucks extra for a superior level of skill.

It's a shame that all of this effort and interest is so badly misdirected. When the marksmanship program reaches the point that it has in many places, it's time to evaluate what has happened to an area of police training that is fundamentally intended to keep cops alive. There's no quarrel with the fact that many good cops have fun with competitive marksmanship. In fact, there is a great deal of good that has come from it, particularly in the field of speed-loaders and other equipment. The point is simply that the competitive marksmanship programs are getting undue consideration.

The basic purpose of police weapons training in the late 1980s is survival. I am not referring to the intense training that many SWAT officers receive, but the education given the average working cop who goes about day-to-day patrol work. He carries a handgun, because regulations require it



*We shoot at paper targets in training and there's no way around that, but we must remember that it's for survival.*





*Regardless of the handgun used by the department or individual officer, the goal should be the same. First accuracy, then speed. The author also feels that a much more pragmatic approach is needed in all police handgun training. These Montebello, California, officers are training with their new S&W Model 645s.*

and common sense dictates it. With rare exceptions, the police officer shot or stabbed in the line of duty is killed while performing some utterly routine police function. It comes as a surprise; there's seldom much warning and, if it is to be avoided, it has to be because he's trained as a survival shooter.

Survival is the goal. Cops shoot to stop someone from a life-threatening criminal attack on themselves or another person. The current state of the law is such that the justification for shooting at a fleeing felon is reserved for a few rare instances where it can be demonstrated that the felon must be stopped before he harms other people. Rightly or wrongly, this is where court decisions and the efforts of thousands of earnest young liberal attorneys have brought us. We remain fortunate that most jurisdictions retain statutes that regard attacks on policemen as, at least, mildly reprehensible.

One police funeral attended in a career is one too many. When it happens, the law enforcement fraternity clusters together as never before. Invariably there are long processions of cars from all local agencies, firing squads, eulogies and grieving widows in black. This is something that we'd all like to avoid, if possible.

We need to cluster together just as tightly in understanding that all that matters in police weapons training is sur-

vival. Everything else is totally secondary and anything that can't be seen as keeping cops alive doesn't belong.

Therefore, how can you justify something as senseless as the PPC gun? This is a revolver that has been extensively modified for shooting the PPC course in competition. Usually, the PPC gun starts as a modern high-quality revolver. A skillful gunsmith adds a whopping heavy bull barrel, a match-quality stock, then a set of oversized sights on a heavy top rib. The action gets smoothed up to the point that it's exceptionally easy to shoot in deliberate double-action firing. It finishes up as a gorgeous firearm, one that raises the revolver to the pinnacle of its development. But nobody in his right mind would try to use such an awkward brute in a duty holster on the street.

The problem comes in the sense that the small number of officers who wish to compete with other cops in matches with these guns tend to gravitate to the range. All too often their skill draws the kind of attention that enables them to become the supervisors of the training program. In time, the entire program tends to be thinking of competition and not survival.

Most police agencies are training on courses of fire that aren't realistic, because they are fired on unrealistic targets, with unrealistic ammunition and grossly unrealistic time limits. A lot of this comes from the competition men-



tality which places an unrealistic premium on the size of the group on a target.

Before the rangemasters and competitive shooters of the nation rise up in anger at the implied allegation that they aren't sincere about their efforts or (God forbid) that they can't shoot, let's set the record straight. If you practice as much as the competitors do, you'll develop enough shooting skill to likely survive any encounter. And there is no question that range supervisors want the best for those they train. Often time and money budgets are part of the problem, but the fact remains that we need to take a look at the way things are being done.

Let's look at targets first. For years, the Colt silhouette target was used by the thousands on police ranges all over the nation. It was large and it featured the outline of a purported attacker with one hand back in an apparent gun-drawing motion. It was an easy-to-see and easy-to-score target shaped somewhat like a man. It was also jet black with white scoring rings, which roughly delineated the vital areas on a human attacker. History does not record any instance of a policeman's assailant dressed in so accommodating a fashion. It's unrealistic — but still used.

When the competition in police practical shooting matches drove the scores up, the target was modified. Someone took the same outsized silhouette and printed the scoring rings from the Olympic rapid-fire target. This made scoring easier; there were more rings and they were clustered tightly in the midsection. This placed a premium on wadding your shots up tightly. Shooters were able to do this by taking every second allowed and shooting deliberately and carefully.



*Ideally, all of the shooting situations should be handled by SWAT teams, trained and equipped for it. But they're often unavailable and the patrolman has to go it alone.*



*Increasingly, patrol officers are working alone. If they suddenly face a life-threatening emergency, they'll have to deal with it alone. Their training should reflect that.*

Hell yes, it was good shooting. But a survival-oriented instructor would have taken another approach. He would have chopped the time limits for each stage of fire by sixty or seventy percent. That places a premium on speed along with the accuracy. To do otherwise is to produce the situation we had in California several years ago. Some shooters were concentrating heavily on shooting a one-hole group with their twelve rounds at the seven-yard line — which gave them an aiming point on the target for the rest of the match!

Then there's the ammunition. If an agency issues a particular kind of ammunition for use on the street, all practice firing should be done with the same ammunition or a reload that closely simulates the accuracy and recoil of the duty load. Lightly loaded wadcutters for competition purposes have no place in survival training.

Nothing should be allowed that tends to induce an unrealistic habit. Bob Coutts was a much-liked sergeant when he took over the range sergeant's job at the Orange

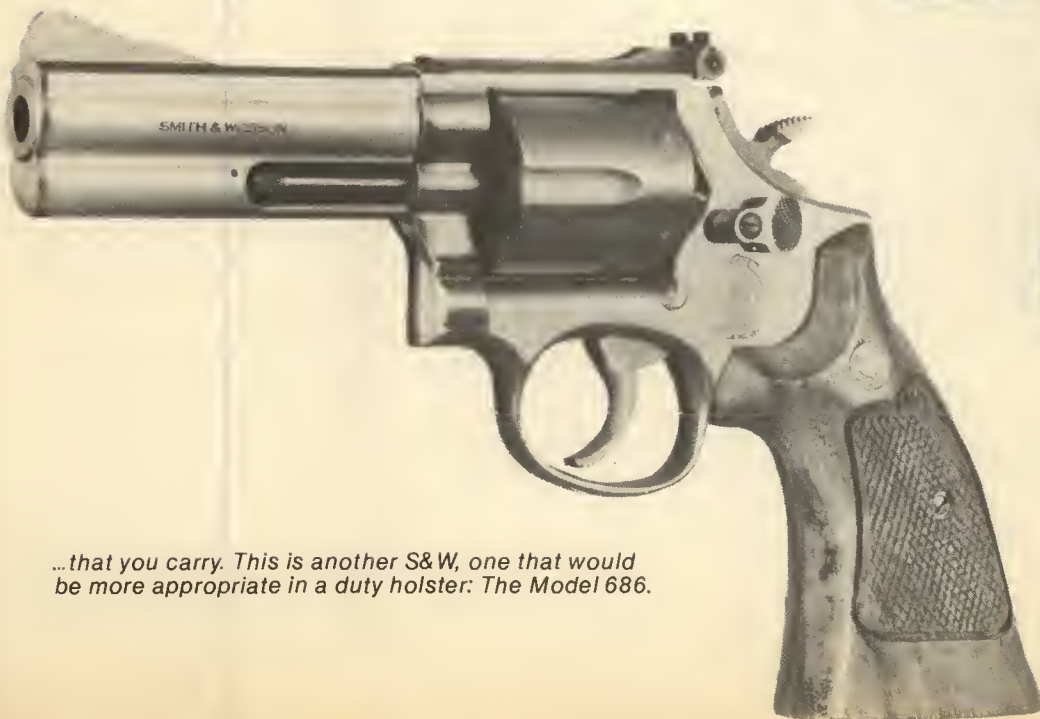


County Sheriff's Department in California. He quickly became something of a pariah by simply removing the #10 cans from the PPC range. Everyone had grown accustomed to a nice can to toss their brass into when they emptied a cylinder; it saved them the trouble of bending over to pick up the brass. There are horror stories about cops being killed with a fistful of brass, because shooting, in their minds, involved policing the brass — and they couldn't find a brass can in that dark alley.

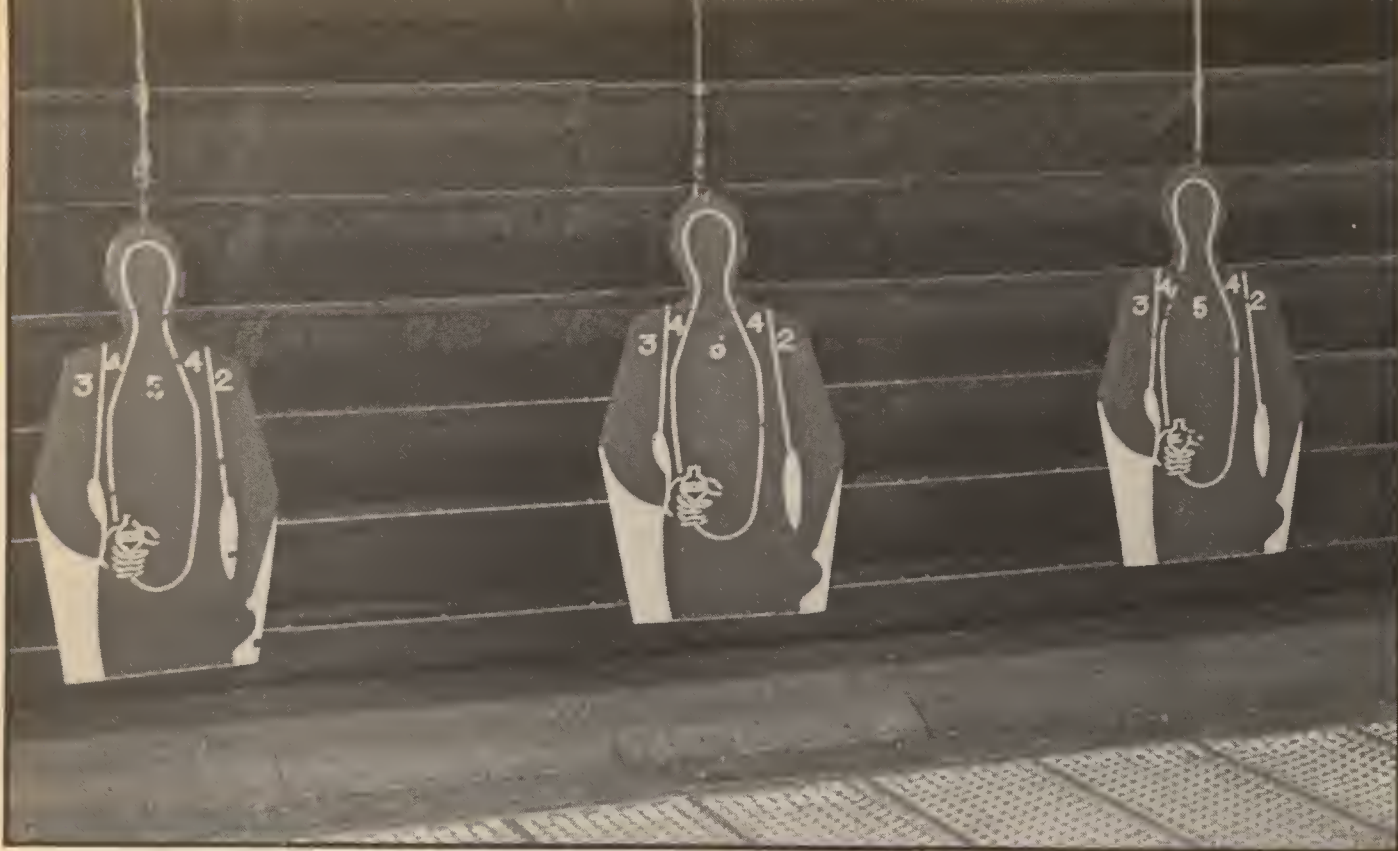
As much as is humanly possible, everything required of a policeman in survival shooting needs to be like what he finds on the street. Holsters and speedloader pouches should be snapped down. He should be required to shoot in the clothing he'll be wearing while he's working, including the protective vest. For patrolmen, that means the uniform; for the investigators, it means they'll have to wear the sport or suit coat.



*It's a beautiful revolver, custom built from a stock S&W and accurate like you wouldn't believe. But it is a PPC gun and unusable on the street. Train with the gun...*



*...that you carry. This is another S&W, one that would be more appropriate in a duty holster: The Model 686.*



*Below: Colt's new 10mm Delta Elite will find its way into police holsters before long. When it's drawn in a training situation, it should be aimed at a more realistic target than the ones above. History does not tell us of an instance where a criminal went about his business with scoring rings printed on his chest and face.*



There are obvious limitations imposed on how far realistic training can be carried. Most of these have to do with economy and safety. With an open checkbook, it would be possible to turn nearly anyone into a skilled gunfighter, but that is not a worthwhile goal. Any police agency has a responsibility to train its personnel in the use of firearms and the trick is in carefully using the available resources to best advantage. Where targets are concerned, why not spend the money allotted for target purchase on targets that are somewhat realistic?

Targets that are larger than any human aren't realistic, nor are targets that feature discernible scoring rings. The more lifelike the appearance of the target, the better; this is particularly true when "shoot-don't shoot" training is being conducted. At the very least, the target should not be one that is frankly designed to be easy to see. One of the best compromises is the Milpark or the new IPSC standard targets used by the IPSC shooters. Another is the Trans-Tar target used by several federal agencies.

Time is another factor in the training situation that deserves attention. It is not realistic to train policemen to shoot a particular course of fire and allow such generous amounts of time for each successive stage that they feel no sense of immediacy about what they are doing. Conversely, it is terribly shattering to their self-confidence to make the time limits so short that they can't get their shots off. There has to be a balance.

A more enlightened approach is to have no time limits, particularly in the initial stages of training. As the trainee becomes more proficient in his ability to hit, then gradually require him to shoot faster. Eventually, he'll get to the





*Modern speedloading devices, like these from HKS, are a boon to the working cop, but take some practice.*

point that he can shoot with speed as well as accuracy. Hitting must always take precedence. Bill Jordan, the legendary Border Patrol man, has commented on the lack of lethality inherent in a fast noise.

The goal, therefore, is to get the trainee to a point where he can hit what he is shooting at quickly. What is he shooting at? Is it the top half of the second shirt button on an

opponent's chest? Maybe the center of the pack of cigarettes in his chest pocket? Not likely.

The target is the majority of the human torso, an area containing most of the body's vital organs. Experience tells us that hits in this area will put the opponent down in most cases. Hits that are precisely centered in the torso have no greater probability of stopping the attacker than

*Training should be as though the officer were working the street. That means the holster will be snapped down and the magazine or speedloader pouches also fastened.*

*Part of the drill in getting the gun into action has to be unsnapping the holster. This is as realistic as brass cans on the range aren't. See text for details on that!*





*Montebello officers training in the department's basement range with S&W 645s. They were battering their magazines in reloading practice when they were dumped onto the concrete. Rather than induce the bad habit of babying their magazines, the department provided "range" magazines that are replaced as needed.*

hits that are in the vital area, but not centered up. Effort beyond that necessary to develop the shooter's ability to get his shots in the area is wasted effort. Allowing more time in the interest of shooting a tiny group in the center is just poor training philosophy.

Certain marksmanship instructors will argue that the best way to ensure a hit in the vital area is to insist that all hits be well centered. Their argument makes sense to a degree, but almost invariably you'll find that they aren't crowding the trainee in regard to time. The ideal training package has yet to be defined, but it should tend toward teaching the shooter to hit first, then hit quick. It goes without saying that he needs to be armed with a gun and ammunition combination that's adequately powerful.

So far, we haven't said much at all about the actual teaching of marksmanship technique. It wasn't so long ago that policemen were taught to shoot and re-qualified periodically on round bullseye targets. The stance was that of the classic pistol shooter, one-handed, with the off-hand thrust deep into the front trousers pocket. This training had the beneficial effect of teaching sight alignment, sight picture and trigger control. Clearly, shooting in this fashion is unrealistic.

In the early 1960s, shooters in Southern California

began to use several different forms of two-handed stances. This was in the infancy of the Southwest Combat Pistol League. Their matches in those days all were intended to be practical exercises in what Jeff Cooper began to call "pistolcraft." The men and women who trained and competed in those early years of what later became the International Practical Shooting Confederation found that shooting with two hands is better than with one.

Of course it is. A pistol becomes an instrument of considerable precision at a variety of ranges when it is brought to bear by a man skilled in the Weaver stance. The SCPL shooters also learned that a two-handed stance can be assumed quickly. Their shooting skills developed rapidly and spread all over the nation. A great deal of what they learned and what became gospel was similar to the teachings of a British Colonial Police officer named Fairbairn.

In time, this way of shooting has evolved to the point that it's widely regarded as the only way to shoot. Some instructors have modified the Weaver stance to what is called the isosceles. The major difference in these two methods of two-handed shooting is that the arms are straightened to full-length extension in the isosceles. In the Weaver, the shooting hand is extended to near full length and the supporting hand and arm back against it.





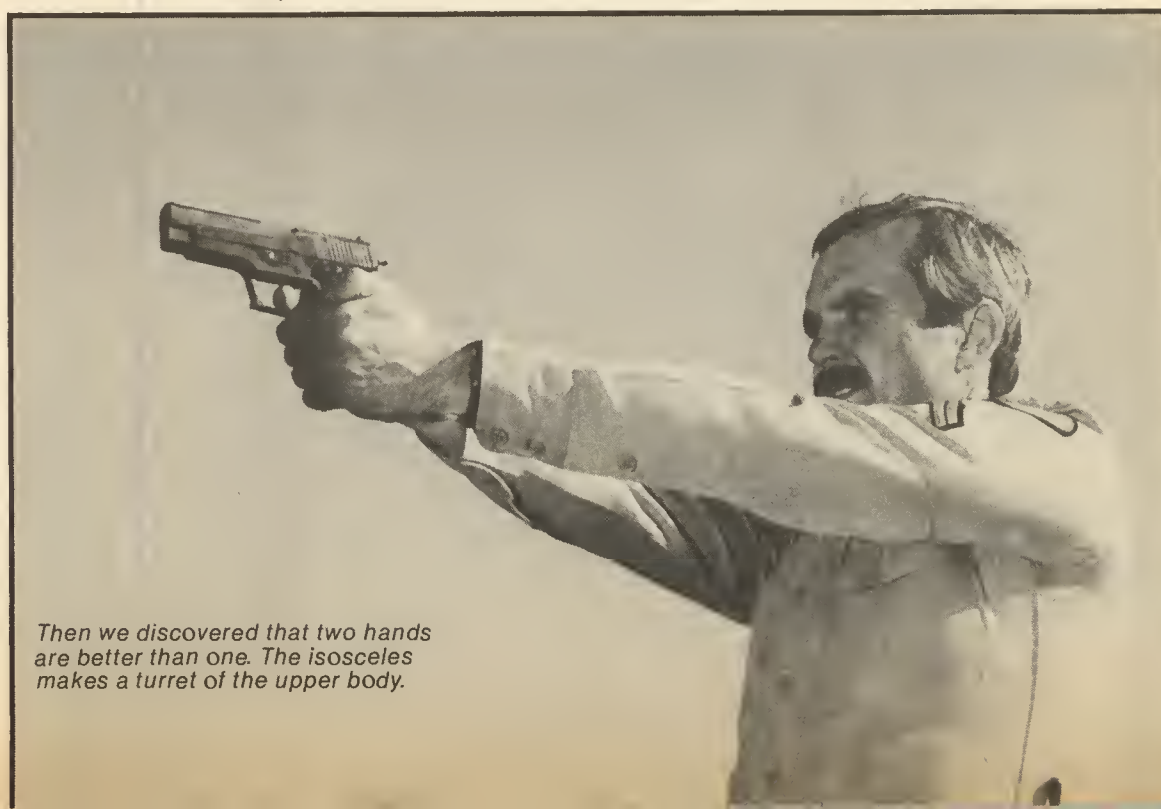
*Policemen used to train with the stance of the bullseye shooter, a challenging but unrealistic form.*

Either stance is stable. The isosceles makes a veritable turret of the upper body, but it can't be taken up quite as rapidly as the Weaver stance. A shooter well versed in either or both is going to be competitive on the outdoor ranges where "practical" competition is held. He may or may not be competitive in the typical police shooting situation.

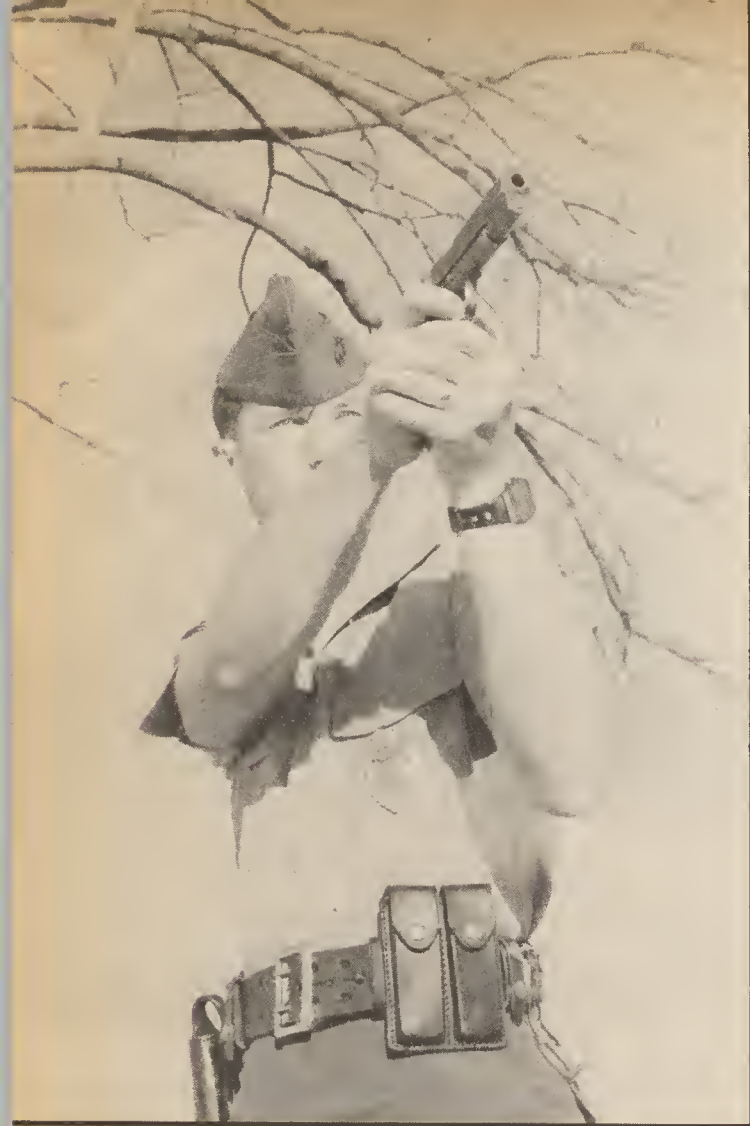
Various studies performed by different law enforcement agencies over the last several decades have established quite firmly that most policemen who get into shooting situations do so at close range. In fact, the original choice

of the seven-yard line as the closest range from which to shoot on the PPC course was based on an FBI study that said this is where the action was. Most police shootings occur within seven yards and the greatest percentage of them closer than that. For this reason, it is not realistic to spend lots of time shooting at greater distances.

Most police handgun training — perhaps sixty to seventy percent — should be held at close range. At these distances, no more than ten yards, the emphasis will be on fast point shooting. This concept doesn't alter the need for accuracy, but it does place more emphasis on speed. When



*Then we discovered that two hands are better than one. The isosceles makes a turret of the upper body.*



every study ever done says essentially the same thing, why train for something that won't happen?

You train for it because it *might* happen. And that is why the remainder of the training time — thirty to forty percent — should be spent on exercises that will enhance the officer's skill at greater distances. Again, the majority of available time should be on close-range speed shooting.

And in this form of shooting, there is not a lot of time to take up any kind of stance such as the Weaver or isosceles. It becomes an exercise in drawing and point shooting in the fastest possible time. Since there is not sufficient time for assuming a two-handed stance, why teach it in the close-range portion of training?

There isn't any reason to do so. Most training should be close-range, *one-handed* speed-shooting from a variety of awkward positions. This is the way that it is likely to happen; this is the way we ought to train.

There is one more reason why policemen need to learn to shoot with a single hand. The same studies establish that police shootings often occur at night or in other conditions of reduced visibility. Every policeman worth his Winchell's donuts has a flashlight in his left hand when he's working at night. The average cop will expend more D-cell batteries by far in a career than he will 125-grain jacketed hollow points.

Facetiousness aside, the fact remains that cops are virtually inseparable from their lights at night. They just won't throw the light down in order to take up a two-handed stance. If their training causes them to try to two-hand it, instinctively, then there's too good a chance that there will be a moment of panic. A shooting situation is scary enough without the confusion that surrounds the dilemma of what to do with the flashlight that is almost invariably in the off-hand.

*Of all two-handed stances, the Weaver is unquestionably the best. As demonstrated by Sgt. Paul Hayes, USMC, it can be assumed in an instant. It is stable and exceptionally accurate. The right hand pushes forward as the left pulls back. With practice, the stance is comfortable and becomes almost instinctive.*





Sure, there are a number of accepted techniques of shooting with the flashlight and they ought to be evaluated and taught whenever possible. Inside that close-range danger zone, though, the shooting should be one-handed, fast, pointed, accurate fire. It is possible to teach people to do this; expend the time and effort and do it!

People will handle guns as they have learned to do. Instinctively, they will cleave to the techniques they have been taught. If the ingrained instinct tells them to look for a brass can to dump their brass, they will do so. If the training has programmed them to assume a certain stance, they will try to do so. That may turn out to be difficult or impossible or excessively costly in time.

Other skills also need attention. One of the most neglected is speed reloading. With either revolvers or automatics, there are ways of reloading the handgun with remarkable speed. While it cannot be demonstrated that fast reloading is necessary in the course of most police shootings, it has been an important factor in plenty of them. Policemen should be able to re-charge their piece in a matter of a few seconds, without looking at the gun or ammo.

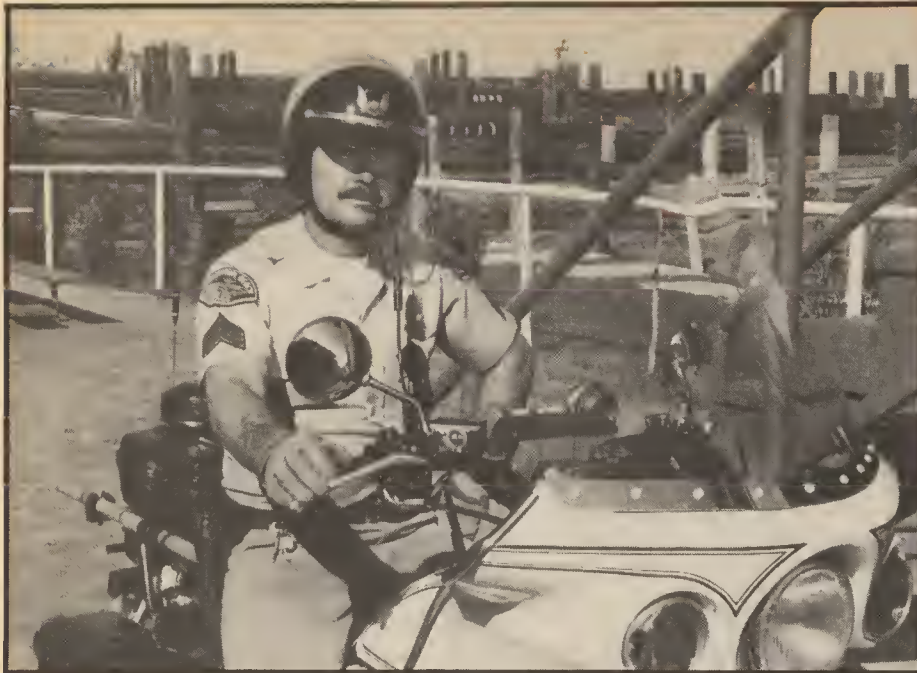
Not all police marksmanship is with a handgun. Most patrol cars have a shotgun racked up in the front seat area. There are a lot of policemen who have picked up the idea that they can't miss with the scattergun, because it spreads its pattern over a wide area. Nothing could be farther from the truth. A shotgun blast has certain characteristics which every officer needs to learn for himself.

Shotguns are noisy, kick some people harder than others, use expensive ammunition, but they're worth their weight in gold under the right circumstances. And the right circumstances are just about any time that the police officer is aware that trouble is brewing. Once in a while, such as in the search of a close-quarters building, the shotgun re-



*Above: The isosceles takes a little longer to assume. From this position, with feet square to the target, a shooter can pivot almost a full 180 degrees. Below: When the shooting is close, inside of seven yards or even less, then the stance will probably be more like this. Fast, pointed shooting is quite possible.*





*You can't always assume that you will have the time and space to take up an "approved" position to shoot from. This motor officer is forced to shoot from the seat of motorcycle, around the windshield.*



stricts the mobility to such a degree as to justify leaving it behind. Unlike the handgun, the shotgun has to be fired with two hands. Since the shotgun is most commonly used when there is some warning, the range at which it is used might be a little greater.

There are several points that need to be made with abundant clarity in a good shotgun training syllabus. One is that the pattern will spread as the range increases, but that it is easy to miss with the commonly used #00 buckshot. At the closer ranges, the pattern is small enough that the gun

needs to be pointed at the center at the target. At powder-burn distances, a few inches of deflection at the muzzle might spell a complete miss.

As the range increases, missing is still possible, but for different reasons. In spite of the improvements in shotgun ammunition, there are still only nine #00 pellets in a typical shell and the ammomakers can't guarantee that they will be evenly distributed. There will be holes in that pattern and sometimes that will result in a total miss, particularly at the greater ranges. The situation is best handled



*Huntington Beach PD loves the SIG-Sauer 220 and the officers practice with the gun regularly. It's pointed in the hands of this officer. This is likely what he would do in many routine patrol situations. When the range increases, use two hands.*



by marksmanship and gun-handling technique.

Marksmanship means the ability, developed through enough practice, to point the shotgun rapidly at the center of mass on the target. In humans, this is typically the torso. The skill isn't terribly difficult to teach, but the trainee needs to be allowed to fire enough ammunition from a variety of positions that he becomes confident in his ability. The gun-handling technique with a shotgun is a bit different.

To fire either a revolver or automatic pistol, the only hand motion required is pulling the trigger. More shots are



*Left: What do you do at night when the off hand holds a flashlight? This is one of several accepted shooting positions using the flashlight — hands are back to back. Above: Speed reloading old reliable — the Colt .45 auto.*



triggered by the same motion. This is not true of a shotgun. It's common for shooters on police ranges to fire a shot with the shotgun and try a second one without pumping the action. The practice of "fire — *pump*, fire — *pump*" needs to be hammered home with the emphasis reserved for "right face" in another setting.

Shotguns use ammunition that is perfectly cylindrical in shape. That isn't the most reliable contour for reliable feeding and jams in the police shotgun are not uncommon. What is frighteningly possible is having a "short-stroke" jam, wherein the pump is retracted only far enough to allow a shell to exit the magazine tube, but not far enough to clear the fired shell from the chamber. The result is a gun hopelessly tied up. The problem is so bad in certain guns that some instructors now are teaching their students to throw



*Above: Handguns need to be mastered as they are used. This S&W 581 has a set of those excellent Jordans as well as a smooth action job. Left: It is so easy to miss with a shotgun, but many regard it as an invincible weapon. It isn't and requires special skills and training. This is the most neglected area of police firearms skill.*







*Shotguns will jam if they aren't handled correctly. Clearing jams needs to be taught more thoroughly.*

*Even the investigators who carry the little guns need to practice. The practice should be with the gun, leather and clothing that they'll wear in actual working situations. Also include reloading.*



the gun aside and go with the handgun, rather than screw around with clearing the mess. A better solution is to pump the action hard immediately after each shot is fired.

Whether it is with shotgun or handgun, the greater question that some agencies are tackling is not so much *how* to shoot, but rather *when*. Increasingly, the answer seems to be only when it threatens the life of an officer or innocent bystander. If there is any way that a situation can be contained until more help arrives, that's really the best way. More officers on the scene and even the specially equipped and trained SWAT officers is a lot better solution than one guy rushing in where angels would not even tiptoe.

That's all well and good in the broad sense. Every situation would best be handled with the entire panoply of police firepower and other equipment. But there's not likely going to be time to call up the specialists when a family dispute turns nasty and some crazy drunk is trying to make a canoe out of you with the family butcher knife.

This is, as they say, "up-close and personal"; best resolve it quickly, immediately, and right-damned-now. The cop that does so will forever regard that bit of survival shooting as his personal best.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

# **COPS, CARTRIDGES**



# **AND CALIBERS**

*An Experienced Texas Cop Looks  
At Today's Police Ammunition Scene.  
Plus A New View Of Automatic Ammo — In Revolvers*

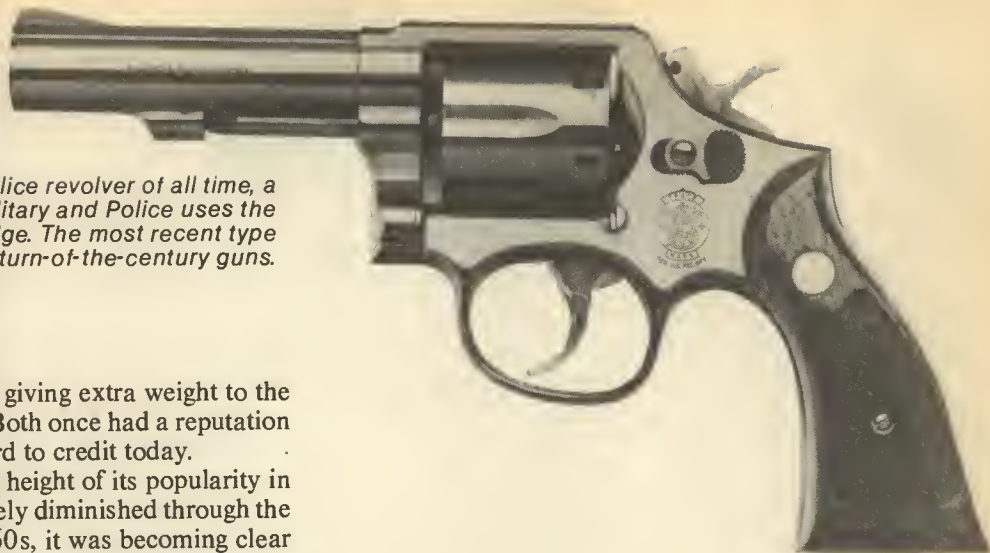
**M**ODERN POLICE ammunition comes in such a wide array of calibers, projectile types and velocity levels it's hard to make an intelligent choice, especially for the officer who is inexperienced or not inclined to study ballistics tables.

Such an officer may be surprised to learn that not so long

ago it was possible for the author of a mystery novel to declare his victim was shot with a "police special," and everyone knew what he meant. Invariably it meant the ubiquitous .38 Special, loaded with a round-nosed 158-grain bullet at the standard velocity of 800+ feet per second. If he really wanted to become involved in esoterica, the author might specify the murder-deed was done with the



*Perhaps the most popular police revolver of all time, a Model 10 Smith & Wesson Military and Police uses the omnipresent .38 Special cartridge. The most recent type of Model 10 differs little from turn-of-the-century guns.*



200-grain .38 Special loading, giving extra weight to the heinous aspect of the offense. Both once had a reputation for deadliness and lethality hard to credit today.

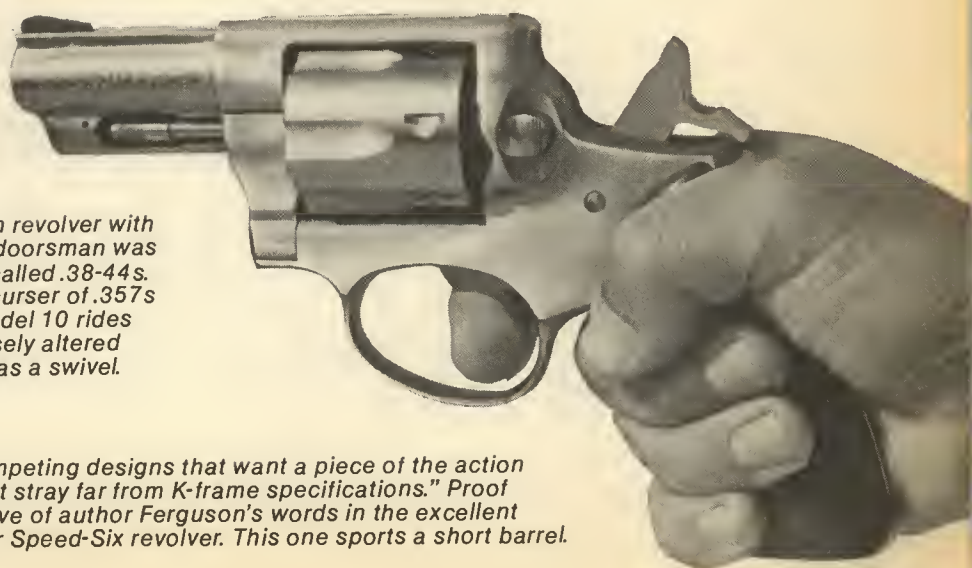
The .38 Special reached the height of its popularity in the 1930s and continued scarcely diminished through the Forties and Fifties. By the 1960s, it was becoming clear that it lacked power for law enforcement work even with improved bullets. Introduced in 1902 as a "magnumized" version of the .38 Long Colt, it gradually became a police



standard with no real manstopping virtue behind it. The true appeal was in the weapon which housed it, the now-classic Smith & Wesson Military & Police revolver, later designated Model 10.

Soldiers or police officers who had endured actual combat were under no delusions about the .38 Special. They knew the limitations of the .38 caliber round-nose slug, but they liked the gun. It was handy, light enough at some thirty-six ounces loaded to pack around all day; above all, it was enormously rugged and reliable compared to any previous double-action revolver ever built. In short, the .38 M&P was user-friendly, with that indefinable quality of human engineering and ergonomics that has popularized a number of weapons. Constructed on what is now called the "K"-size frame, millions have been built, simply because it suits wheelgunners better than anything remotely comparable. Competing designs that want a piece of the real action do not stray far from K-frame specifications.

*Across the page, another Smith & Wesson revolver with the ammo it fired. The 1930s vintage Outdoorsman was made to handle hot-loaded .38 Specials called .38-44s. The gun-ammo combination was the precursor of .357s of later days. Above: A heavy-barreled Model 10 rides in a clamshell holster. This officer has wisely altered his clamshell to ride high on his belt, not as a swivel.*



*"...competing designs that want a piece of the action do not stray far from K-frame specifications." Proof positive of author Ferguson's words in the excellent Ruger Speed-Six revolver. This one sports a short barrel.*



*There were some early efforts to jazz up police ammunition selection, as seen here. When the bank robbers of the Thirties sped away from all of those midwestern banks, we became preoccupied with penetrating metal. The revolver is a Smith & Wesson .38-44 Heavy Duty, built on the large N-frame.*

If the M&P of 1899 was good, how good was the cartridge? Obviously it was good enough from the beginning to remain the primary police cartridge of today. The .38 Special often is described as a "well-balanced" cartridge and so it is. Recoil is moderate; velocity is moderate; stopping power is so-so. It all adds up to a service revolver/cartridge combo with which it is easy to train and hit.

The most damaging charge against the .38 Special is that it gives one-shot stops only about fifty percent of the time with the standard 158-grain RN bullet. What may be overlooked is that statistics such as these weren't always kept and for many years the .38 enjoyed a much better reputation than it does today. It remains in police holsters largely because it is one of the most economical of service handguns with which to equip large bodies of officers — and perhaps one of the most durable. Many M&P 10s, as well as some Colt models built two or three decades ago, are still in service.

With improved record keeping and periodic nudging from prominent gunwriters, it was discovered that the .38 Special was failing to win gunfights for the officers who carried it. It had always been failing, of course; only few people noticed it.

In light of the crime problem we now have, it may come as a surprise to learn that gunfights involving police officers were a relatively rare occurrence right up to the 1960s. Many factors are responsible for the increase in police

shootings, but the point is that the .38 was carried much, but fired infrequently in anger.

As an example, at the close of the 1950s, a police officer was killed in a major Texas metropolis during a gun battle. Public reaction was one of horror and outrage, as he was the first officer to die in line of duty in a quarter-century. In 1969, in a similar-size community in the same state, another officer lost his life, the first in twenty-three years. Today, of course, the killing of a police officer barely qualifies as front page news. One is tempted to observe that, as the civil rights of individual citizens increased, so did the probability of police shootings and crime skyrocketing.

Handloaders had been experimenting with the .38 Special for years and got good results with Keith-style semi-wadcutters, hollow-points and even some primitive jacketed bullets. Still, a need existed for an effective production cartridge that would upgrade the old-timer and make it a manstopper. A young handgunner and businessman named Lee Jurras filled that need in the mid-1960s with a factory round called *Super Vel*. Bullet weight was drastically reduced and velocity stepped up.

The new .38 Super Vel carried a 110-grain jacketed hollow-point (JHP) bullet which was calculated to expand, thus creating greater tissue disruption — hence stopping power — than standard weight slugs. It was a daring concept, controversial right down to the present day. Such light bullets lack momentum and a great many people feel





*Super Vel was the first modern high performance ammunition. By using a light bullet with a large hollow-point cavity, maker Lee Jurras was able to achieve violent expansion. The bullet was driven to some exceedingly high velocities.*

this is an important factor in actual stopping power.

Jurras faced two realities, neither of which was encouraging. The first was that most officers were armed with .38 Specials and still are. The second was that, ballistically, the .38 is an unfortunate cartridge. As one approaches the velocity levels required to expand a JHP bullet, even a light one, pressures rise unacceptably. You can drive a .38 slug to just over 1000 feet per second, right at the borderline of expansion; but after that, you're finished. Quality revolvers may not blow up, but you are feeding it "blue pills" if you go any higher, asking for trouble.

To give him credit, Lee Jurras' light 110-grain JHP reached some 1080 fps from the usual four-inch service barrel and often did expand at close-range impact velocities.

Whether or not this actually increases stopping power is, as mentioned, still a matter of controversy. When it succeeded, officers swore by it, naturally. The thing about gunfights is that hardly anyone survives enough of them to become a really good judge of bullet performance. The original Super Vel is no longer available, but it set a trend in the industry toward lightweight expanding bullets. Some expand better than others, but all give better results than the archaic round-nosed slug.

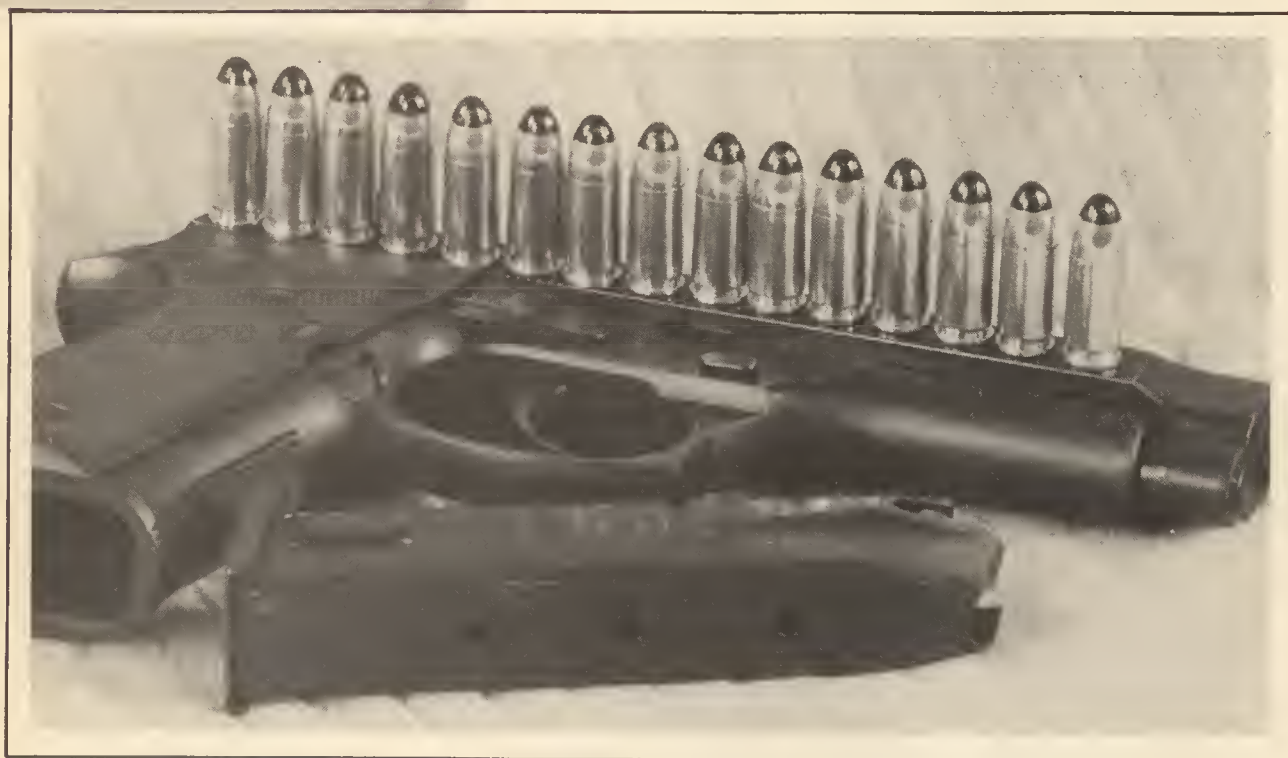
It might seem logical to simply go one step up to the .357 magnum. At these higher velocity levels, it isn't much of a problem to get good bullet expansion, excellent penetration and lethal stopping power. Many progressive departments did this, but it's not realistic for others.

*The other ammunition manufacturers responded with performance ammunition of their own. Some of it is seen here along with a revolver that has passed away. The gun is a Smith & Wesson Model 27 with a five-inch barrel. The frame of such a revolver is heavy; this is the best compromise barrel length.*





*High-capacity magazines in 9mmP autoloaders took the police scene by storm in the mid-1970s. The pistol to the left is an exotic Czech import called the CZ-75. A magazine with as many as eighteen shots is possible in some guns, but the norm seems to be around fourteen or fifteen as in the Beretta seen below. The arguments on the issues of automatic and revolver ammunition go on endlessly, but it's clear that good ammo's made for both.*



The problem is twofold: big departments already armed with the .38 Special face an enormous expense to re-equip with the .357 mag. Another factor is increased recoil and muzzle blast that make sure hits and good marksmanship uncertain. The .357 has roughly double the recoil of the .38, more than the average cop can handle — or so says the NRA. Queried on the subject, they report that once .38 Special recoil levels are exceeded, practice scores and actual hits in combat situations drop dramatically. This not only tallies with the author's experience, but may even be understated.

Two things work in favor of the officer armed with the .357: Most gunfights take place inside the well known

"danger zone" of seven yards, so no great marksmanship is necessary. Most cops receive enough training to hit at this close range. The other factor is that most departments issue .357 ammo which carries a lightweight expanding bullet, reducing recoil and the chances of over-penetration. Given this, you have a good tool in the .357.

Still King of the Hill in police work due to wide distribution, the .38 is nevertheless losing ground to the .357 and automatics in 9mm and .45 caliber. The .357 is unquestionably a better stopper, but offers no more actual firepower than the .38 Special, still restricted to six shots.

For a one-on-one confrontation, the old six-shooter is all you could ask for, but firepower is becoming more



important as officers face multiple opponents armed with better weapons. For a time there was a trend toward the .45 auto, especially on the West Coast, but the momentum is gone now, dropped in favor of the high-capacity 9mm autos.

Early in the 1970s, the S&W Model 59 was the gun cops wanted and they bought them in large numbers for off-duty purposes. Several fairly large cities bought and issued them or at least approved them for on-duty street wear. Sadly, the first generation M59s had accuracy and mechanical problems which gave them a black eye. This is emphatically the worst thing that can happen to a new model handgun. Cops are by nature a conservative lot, even distrustful. The M59 was recalled and repaired and is a better gun today, but it never recouped its reputation. It is still seen in police holsters, but the buying spree is over.

Although a large handgun for the power it dispenses, the Beretta Model 92 is a 9mm which is utterly reliable and promises wide acceptance. This is the gun that the U.S. Army chose to replace the Colt .45 M1911A1, but the police liked it first. The Connecticut State Police have adopted it, along with several smaller agencies. The gun handles well in spite of its size, and may be awkward only in the smallest hands. The cutaway slide is typical Beretta — common since the 1930s — making stovepipe jams unlikely. We wonder at our small American ejection ports.

Curiously, cops showed little interest in the 9mm until several good things happened. Ammunition improved with the introduction of JHPs during the Seventies and the designs evolved into double-actions with large magazine capacity. The excellent single-action Browning Hi-Power had been imported here for years, but was routinely ignored. It was not double-action and only FMJ ammo was avail-

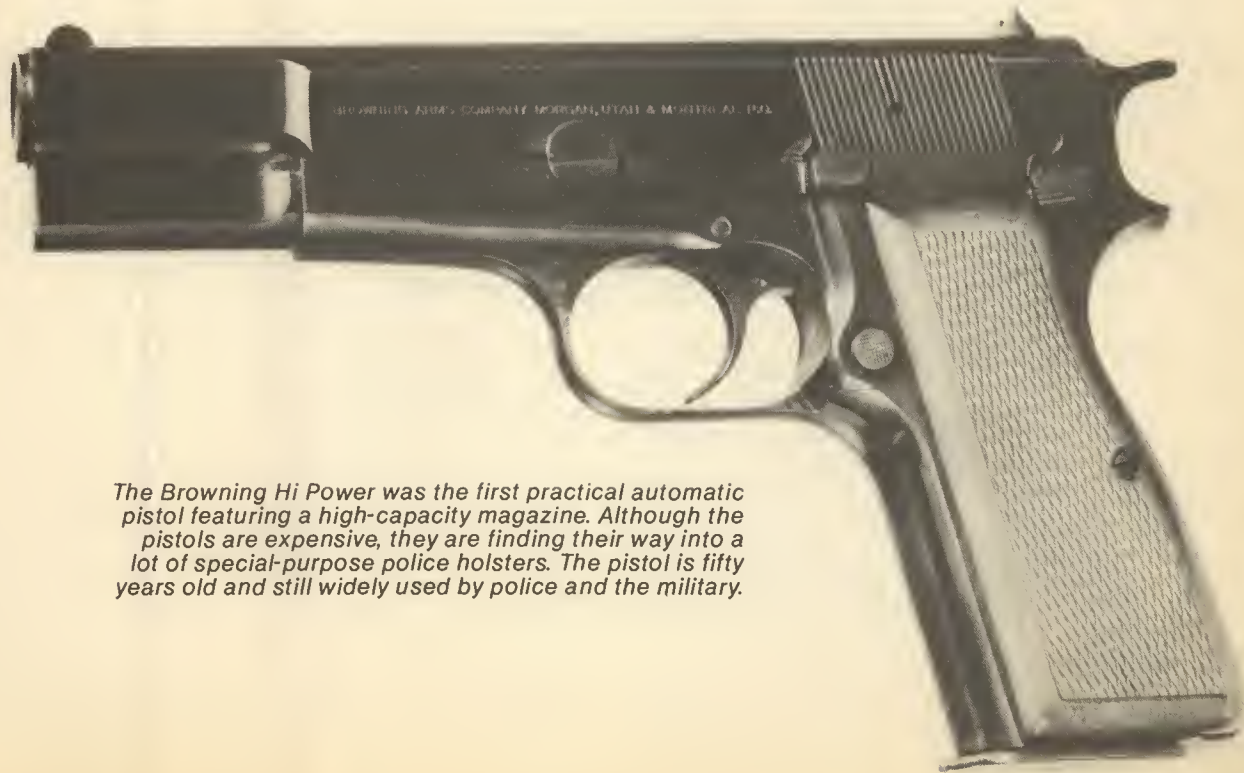
able. Now it is showing up in the hands of stake-out teams and SWAT officers and is a favored off-duty weapon. In a world of expensive 9mm autos, the Browning is even more expensive; a prestige item.

It is clear we have a situation in law enforcement where the .38 Special, .357 magnum, 9mm and .45 auto dominate the scene. There was a brief flurry of interest in a .41 caliber service revolver which was used by a few departments from its introduction in 1964 until the late 1970s. The gun was an enlarged M&P, designated the Model 58 S&W, chambered for the .41 mag. It was — and still is — an excellent service gun, comparable in power to the .45 ACP.

In concept, the .41 seemed a desperate effort to counter, with big heavy slugs, the not-so-good expanding qualities of .38 and .357 JHPs. Built on the S&W N-frame, it was a large, heavy revolver. When smaller female officers began to be hired and improved medium-caliber bullets appeared, the .41 simply died. If you have one and are allowed to carry it, the .41 mag will work as well as some and better than most.

The police load is the 210-grain SWC at 950 fps; deadly but not overly accurate. Don't make the mistake of buying the 210-grain JSP or JHP hunting loads at 1250 fps. Recoil is comparable to a full-house .44 mag, too much for police work. A 170-grain Silvertip is available from Winchester, but has no established police performance.

We can look at the four dominant calibers and see what works best on the street in .38 Special, 9mmP, .357 mag and .45 ACP. We'll do this in some depth, *without* reference to Hatcher's Tables of Relative Stopping Power or the Relative Incapacitation Index. These are worthy studies, but may not reflect actual street values, where stopping power either exists — or it doesn't.

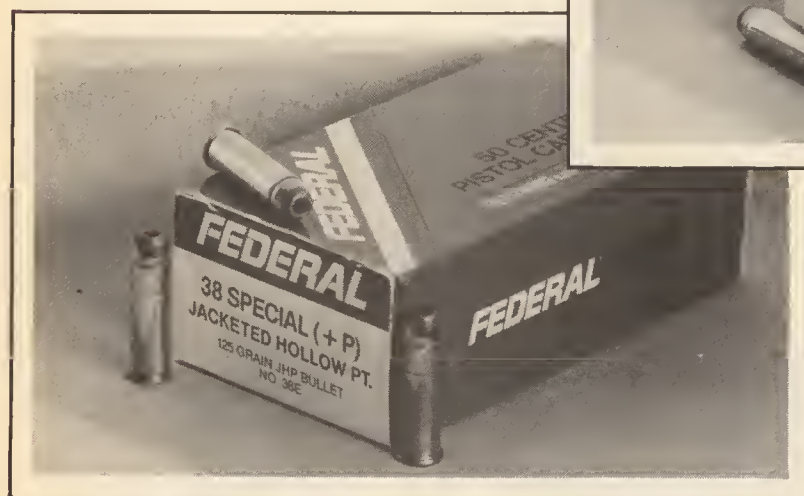
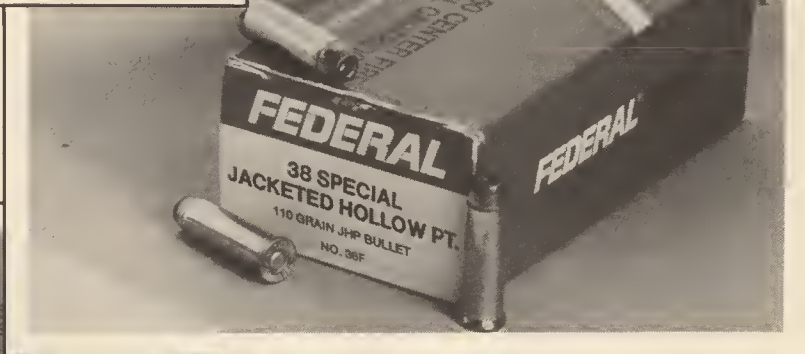


*The Browning Hi Power was the first practical automatic pistol featuring a high-capacity magazine. Although the pistols are expensive, they are finding their way into a lot of special-purpose police holsters. The pistol is fifty years old and still widely used by police and the military.*



*Left: Extremely light bullets in .38 Specials, such as this 95-grain load, aren't favored by author Ferguson. He prefers a bit more weight to the bullet in order to get more penetration.*

*Right: Except for a few uncommon special cases, the 110-grain slugs aren't all that good a choice, either. The ammunition is high-quality stuff, but bullets are too light.*



*Left: This is Ferguson's choice for most .38 Special use — the 125-grain JHP load. All of the makers produce such a load and one of the best is the Federal number 38E.*

## THE .38 SPECIAL

I carried a S&W M10 for several years during my police career and wished every day for a bigger gun. In retrospect, I may have been better armed than I thought, especially with today's improved ammunition. Bullets are SWC, JHP and JSP in weights ranging from 95 to 158 grains. You can immediately toss out the 95-grain; it has neither weight nor velocity. Also disregard all JSP bullets; the .38 hasn't the velocity to expand them. All jacketed hollow points have some merit, especially in the lighter weights of 110 to 125 grains. Velocities will top 1000 feet per second in the better cartridges, right on the edge of the speed necessary for bullet expansion. Impact velocity is another matter; they may expand at normal gunfight ranges, especially if they hit bone. If your opponent is fifty yards away, forget expansion.

The heavier 140-grain or 158-grain JHP bullets may not expand at any range from any barrel length. To make matters worse, the shape is usually just a flat-tipped round-nose with no particular damaging effect. Sure, if they hit a long bone they will smear, but this is not true expansion.

They will also kill, but shots must be carefully placed. The cartridges that work in actual street use are the Winchester-Western 100-grain Silvertip JHP and the Federal 125-grain +P JHP. An officer should keep in mind that this may be "summertime" ammo. Such light bullets may or may not drive through heavy winter clothing. Even if they do, not much steam is left.

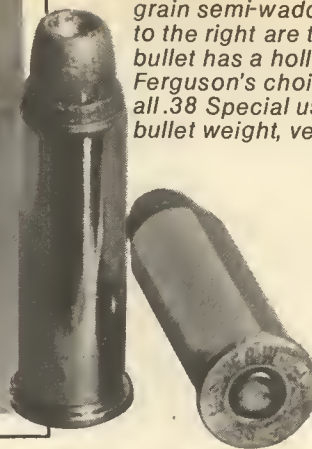
A load which seemingly has everything is the W-W 158-grain +P lead hollow point. It has weight, a SWC configuration for maximum damage if expansion doesn't occur, and a velocity of just a bit less than 1000 fps in four-inch barrels. It usually will expand on a human target and has momentum the lighter bullets can't match. It will ruin you in a navy pea-coat. The slug is as soft as can be run through forming dies, with no tough copper jacket resistance to overcome. In addition to these qualities, it shoots close to point-of-aim in the fixed-sight service revolvers. Such a load is nearly ideal and will cover a wider variety of possible shooting situations better than any other.

Another thing to consider is that the bigger and more muscular the opponent, the better this bullet works. This





The ammo from the box is Winchester 158-grain semi-wadcutter. The two cartridges to the right are the same thing, but the bullet has a hollow point. This is author Ferguson's choice — the hollow point — for all .38 Special uses. It is the best match: bullet weight, velocity, and construction.



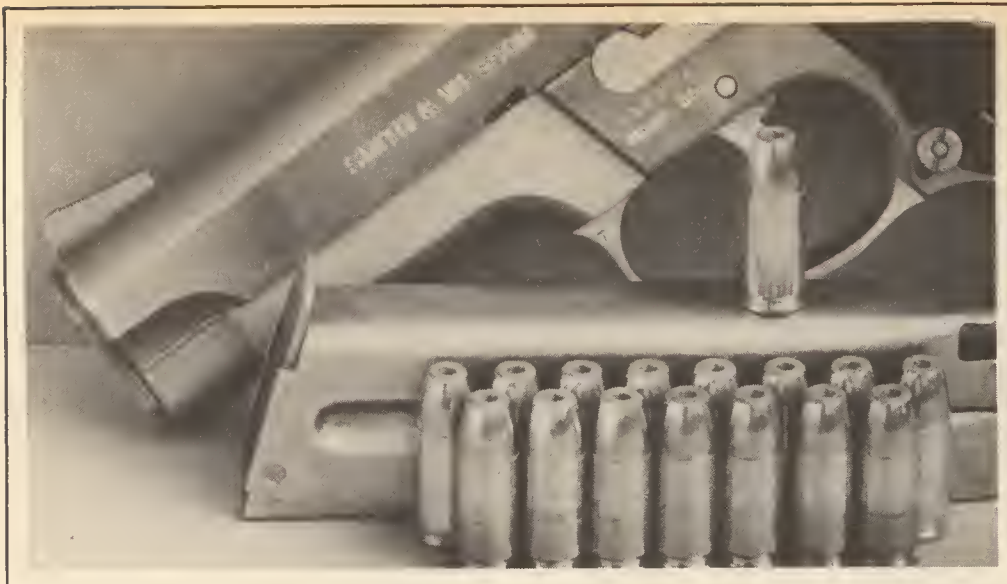
can't be said for a lightweight slapper which may expand so well that penetration suffers. Whatever else you get, you must have enough penetration to drive through to vital organs.

This is the name of the game with virtually all handgun cartridges and calibers. We are deliberately neglecting to quote the usually impressive muzzle energies for these various cartridges, on the proven observation they don't mean a thing. If you get adequate penetration, some tissue destruction in a vital spot and perhaps some expansion, you'll have a manstopper, regardless.

All of these comments apply to the usual service revolver with the four-inch barrel and no others. Ammunition makers are fond of touting performance figures from "a six-inch barrel." If you see this in a manufacturer's brochure, look at his ammo with a jaundiced eye, with a view toward disfavor. Cops don't carry six-inch barrels anymore. If you see one, you're looking at a dinosaur. Cops favor two-inch belly guns such as the Chiefs Special and Colt Detective Special. Opinion is divided on the correct bullet weight to carry in these and I admit to indecision myself. Velocity is apt to be low for expansion purposes, so

*Short barreled guns, such as these fine revolvers from Smith & Wesson, Colt and Ruger, pose special problems in their ammunition. The shorter barrel can reduce velocity of some loads as much as 100 fps, enough to materially affect the performance of the bullet. Heavier bullets are least affected.*





*The argument for less power per shot and more shots per gun is summarized above. A fine Smith & Wesson Model 659 automatic with a magazine full of Federal 115-grain JHPs. It is an accurate and powerful combination that's increasing in law enforcement.*

I tend to favor heavier bullets. You can at least have penetration. The W-W 158-grain +P hollow point is probably as good as anything.

Cops required to carry the .38 Special shouldn't go around with a hangdog expression by any means. What is needed here is attitude adjustment which ignores so-so ballistics and concentrates on the gun as a defensive system. First of all, the use of modern ammo raises the level of one-shot stops to something like seventy percent instead of fifty. It's better than the old round-nosed slug.

Anyway, whoever heard of one-shot stop? The idea is to freight an opponent down with several — or more. This method causes more or less sudden death nearly one hundred percent of the time. If there are multiple opponents, you must adhere to the civil rights of each and distribute the six shots equally. This fairness is required of you.

Seriously, if there was ever a true gunfighter's handgun, it is the M10 or a close duplicate in size or weight, such as the Ruger Security-Six or GP-100 or the similar Colt models. They are quick to the hand and quick into action, unlike the heavy S&W N-frames or Pythons. Anyone who has survived close action appreciates the easy way they can be manipulated and brought into play. This quality is what endeared the gun to policemen in the first place, back in 1902.

#### **THE 9mm PARABELLUM:**

If anything, the 9mmP is responsible for more horror stories than the .38 Special. It is common to read reports of felons absorbing slug after slug without going down and ammo type is not always the FMJ.

In fairness to the cartridge, such incidents are on the

*This combination is used by one major West Coast police department. The idea is to deliberately limit penetration of buildings and walls in an urban setting. The light bullets certainly won't penetrate as deeply as heavy ones. How about stopping power?*





increase with all other calibers, as well. If not as resilient in some ways, human beings today are bigger, stronger and better developed than they were fifty or seventy-five years ago. A major factor, when these shootings are analyzed, is the presence of drugs in the body. Some drugs have a greater effect than others, but all tend to numb the central nervous system or otherwise render the user insensitive to immediate pain and injury. A wound that might well drop a normal person in his tracks can go unnoticed.

Sadly, the use of drugs is now so common the officer is more likely to encounter such an opponent than not. This is an area in which a little ballistic knowledge can pay big dividends. Although most 9mm JHPs or expanding-type bullets are a bit hotter, they are still in the class with the lightweight .38 + P "slappers" mentioned earlier in the .38 Special discussion. Ranging in weight from 90 grains to 125, they often create a gaping wound with massive tissue destruction, but one that isn't necessarily lethal. The faster you drive them, the better they expand, and the better they expand, the less penetration in most instances.

A person high on drugs is hard to stop. You must get inside where he lives and break bones, destroy vital organs and halt the mechanism of life. If you can go through the upper torso to the spine, so much the better. The ultra-light 9mm bullets in the 90- to 95-grain range are vicious expanders at about 1300 fps, but may not meet every situation

adequately. If you have a drug-crazed gunman to put down and use these hot 9mms to merely blow off chunks of meat, you may be a long time doing it. On the other hand, if you get adequate penetration into vital organs with a somewhat slower, heavier slug, the fight can't last long, drugs or not. The human body will go only so long without oxygen or blood supply to the brain.

In this case, the thought occurs that the 9mm might benefit with an entirely new loading with a much heavier-than-normal lead hollow point, similar to the 158-grain W-W .38 Special at about 900 feet per second. Such heavyweights have been loaded in the 9mm, but these are usually FMJ types intended for subsonic use in silenced weapons. Most of us have never seen one. The idea of the heavy lead hollow point is not really practical. Lead bullets do not suit the rifling well in most 9mms.

A good compromise seems to be the 115-grain JHP in several brands, giving some expansion and good penetration. The W-W Silvertip leads the pack for effectiveness, although early "first generation" Silvertips were criticized for not opening up. Now they do, say the statistics. An officer with only mild interest in ballistics gets weary of trying to sort out ammo by generations and wishes they would just make it right the first time.

*This is all fine 9mmP ammunition. Two of the loads in the shooter's hand are 115-grain hollow points and the other is a 123-grain FMJ, useful in some applications.*

*Below: The Federal 115-grain JHP, called the 9BP, has an awesome reputation for accuracy. It shares the trait of the most current JHP rounds — feeding reliability.*





*This customized M1911A1 poses with author's last few rounds of the excellent Norma 230-grain JHP. This was the first of the performance .45 ACP loads. It mated the traditional weight with a huge hollow-point cavity.*



*Remington has sold lots of this 185-grain JHP ammo in the several years that they have been making it. When you reduce bullet weight this much, velocity increases.*

The Federal 115-grain JHP code 9BP at 1150 fps is close behind the Silvertip in velocity and effectiveness and has built a reputation for accuracy as well. Fortunately, the Federal load has always done what it will do and need not be linked to any descendants. Many 9mm pistols are finicky about ammo, so all loads should be thoroughly tested for feeding in the gun before a final choice is made.

The officer armed with a reliable 9mm auto can handle virtually any law enforcement problem, taking advantage of the relatively low recoil it produces and aided by the increased firepower of the large-capacity magazine.

#### THE .45 ACP

In the early 1960s, jacketed soft point and hollow point bullets began to appear in .38/.357 caliber for use as a component by handloaders. Inevitably, some of it showed up in police weapons and a few factory offerings came along. Bullet makers were just starting in this field and their products were none too good. A lot of them looked deadly, but tended toward thick jackets, giving little or no expansion.

Even the hollow points were mostly cosmetic, plugging up with flesh and failing to open. The most fragile bullet of his era was the Super Vel offerings, but even these failed on occasion. It began to look as though real expansion at .38 Special velocities never would be accomplished. Even today it takes every trick of technology — from notched jackets to cavities with exotic shapes — to be successful.

Many small departments, where it was practical to rearm, gave up entirely on the expanding .38 idea and adopted the Colt .45 auto. The reasoning was that a .45 caliber bullet is already fairly big and needs no expansion to make it work — and the .45 auto had an established reputation as a manstopper. True, it has a somewhat more complex mechanism than the double-action revolver, but the small numbers of officers involved made training easier. The big Government Model made a good impression and, where it was tried, it usually remains in use to the present.

In those early years of the Sixties, 230-grain ball ammo was standard issue, simply because it was all that was available short of target wadcutter rounds.

Police officers began to find that the legendary manstopping ability of the .45 was just that: mostly legend. However, it did perform well enough with a decent torso hit and would outshine a .38 Special by a good margin.

After the .45 auto began to show some acceptance in police circles, Norma introduced a .45 combat load which caused great excitement at the time. The cartridge held a steel-jacketed hollow point bullet which looked mean, but still was restricted to the 230-grain weight and pedestrian velocities of the hardball load. Naturally, it wouldn't expand, but was an improvement due to the flattened nose portion. Almost all .45s are of the fixed-sight variety and





*The same .45 with three of the best loads for it. They are Winchester's 185-grain Silvertip, Federal's 185-grain Match JHP and Remington's 185-grain JHP. Not shown is the Hornady 230-grain FMJ, which uses a flat point.*

Norma undoubtedly stuck with the standard 230-grain bullet so it would strike to point-of-aim.

In time, it occurred to other manufacturers that bullets could be lightened, velocity stepped up and hopefully some expansion and increased stopping effect would result. Remington introduced a nice-looking 185-grain JHP which fed well in unaltered guns and short months later Federal had another 185-grain JHP on the market. Super Vel had a 190-grain JHP dubbed the "Flying Ashtray" which may have been the best of any, topping 1000 fps. Unfortunately, the .45 auto is one of those cartridges no less deprived than the .38 Special, operating at the thin edge of the speed needed for bullet upset. Remington and Federal advertised velocities in the 950 fps range, but usually it was less by some 100 fps. In a word, they didn't give good expansion.

Even so, the new lightweight hollow points made a good reputation for themselves in subsequent gun battles and today the 185-grain weight is standard for police .45s. It affords stopping power that is superior to the 230-grain ball, with lower recoil for repeat fire.

Seeking ways to improve the round, W-W introduced their Silvertip design, using a ductile aluminum jacket. For once, the velocity claims of the factory tallied with the chronograph, the 185-grain Silvertip showing about 950 fps in the Government Model 45. This one is the pick of the litter for cops with .45 autos, though not the most accurate. The Silvertip will often give some expansion or bullet deformation, especially since W-W started notching the jackets.



*The Silvertip bullet from Winchester, in any weight or caliber, will expand well. Sometimes, the expansion is quite violent. This is one of the best .45 ACP loads.*

The .45 auto always has been an excellent service gun and will work as well for a cop as it does for a soldier. The main drawback is limited magazine capacity of only seven rounds or a locked-and-cocked cargo of eight. This is usually enough to decide most contests, but the .45 is losing ground to high-capacity 9mms, with their enormous firepower of fifteen to eighteen rounds on tap.

#### THE .357 MAGNUM

Given its current popularity, many people wonder why it took the .357 magnum fifty years to become accepted in law enforcement. Introduced in 1935, it was intended as a police cartridge from the beginning and was used by a few selected agencies such as the FBI and the Treasury De-



*The Outdoorsman was a hefty .38 Special revolver from Smith & Wesson. The old box of cartridges is a reflection of the first perceived need for "performance" ammunition. The performance of the ammo is pale by today's standards. By now, both the fifty-year-old gun and ammo are collector's items.*

partment. Those were the waning days of the Prohibition Era and the organized crime figure in a bulletproof automobile.

Two cartridges were developed to deal with the problem. The old .38 ACP was given a heavier powder charge and chambered in the Colt M1911A1 to become the .38 Super. The .38 Special case was lengthened and given the same treatment, becoming the .357 magnum. Both worked well on armor and bullet-proof glass. From the outset, it was known that both — especially the .357 — had too much power and penetration for ordinary use on human opponents.

The standard .357 bullet of the time was a SWC design of unjacketed lead, weighing 158 grains and driven to an astounding 1500+ fps in the longer barrels. Recoil, muzzle blast and penetration were high, making it an "expert's" cartridge for specialized use. The pressures generated required it be chambered in the heavy N-frame revolvers, normally reserved for .44 and .45 caliber cartridges.

In spite of raw power, the .357 never really was effective in gunfights and had some undesirable characteristics. The heavy lead bullet invariably penetrated completely through an opponent, endangering bystanders and wasting energy. It stopped a felon better than the .38 Special, one supposes, but just how much better is open to question. Police chiefs wisely condemned the .357 for ordinary street use and the cartridge remained in limbo for the next twenty years awaiting development.

Almost simultaneously, two things happened which gave the .357 new life. In 1955, S&W introduced the Model 19, a .357 magnum revolver built on the K-frame, already so popular with police officers. A gunfighter's gun, it was bet-

ter suited to close, fast action than the ponderous N-frames.

This period of the latter Fifties and early Sixties also marked the beginning of modern bullet design, with jacketed soft points and some hollow points beginning to appear. Actual expanding qualities were poor and designs were clumsy, but it was a start in the right direction.

For some reason now hard to fathom, it was thought proper to keep the standard .357 bullet weight at 158 grains, even with these new bullets. As long as this idea persisted, the .357 was still an over-penetrator and a less than efficient manstopper. Although there was much prejudice against them, lighter weight bullets gradually came on the scene, principally the 110- and 135-grain JHPs. Super Vel ammo had a great influence. These bullets actually expanded — viciously at times — and had enough velocity, so penetration was enough, but not too much.

Of the four cartridges under discussion, the .357 gives the greatest actual stopping power, provided the right load is chosen. In street situations, the best proves to be the Federal or Remington 125-grain JHP. Either one gives over 1400 fps in four-inch barrels and stopping power unmatched by any other caliber/cartridge combo. Ironically, where the .357 once was venerated as awesomely powerful, it is now popular to criticize it as barely adequate. This is nonsense. The .357 was and still is an extremely powerful handgun, despite the advent of the .44 and .41 magnums. It shows better stopping ability than either of these bigger calibers; this is verified by street use.

The main drawback to the .357 is — as always — recoil and muzzle blast. Both are severe, particularly in short-barreled, lightweight revolvers.



Winchester's Silvertips for the .357 magnum are made in this 145-grain weight only. It is an excellent compromise between velocity and bullet weight — and the expansion can be spectacular. Below: Federal markets .357 ammo in a variety of weights and styles. Ferguson contends that the .357 magnum is the best of the police calibers.

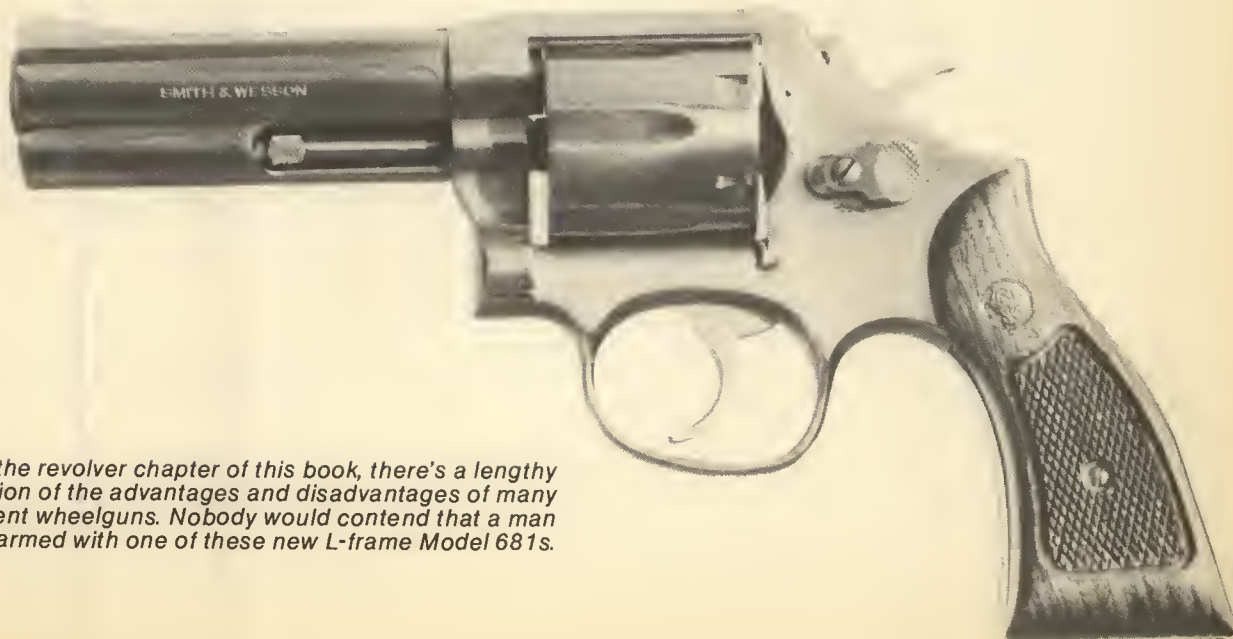


### SPECIAL-PURPOSE AMMO:

During this four-caliber discussion, I've made no attempt to cover each and every load; only those you can get your hands on and which statistics tell us work best on the street. There are a number of exotic, special-purpose loads available, but in all probability you won't fire many. All work well, but distribution is poor and they are invariably expensive. Where extreme penetration is needed, nothing works better than KTW ammo, a light, hard-core, armor-piercing projectile available in several calibers. In the increased manstopping category, we have the Glaser, a "pre-fragmented" bullet consisting of a shot-filled cup. It disintegrates on contact and is said to give instant, lethal one-shot stops.

By carefully choosing the recommended loads and considering the possibilities offered by this special purpose ammo, today's officer is superbly equipped with any of the calibers discussed. — *Tom Ferguson*

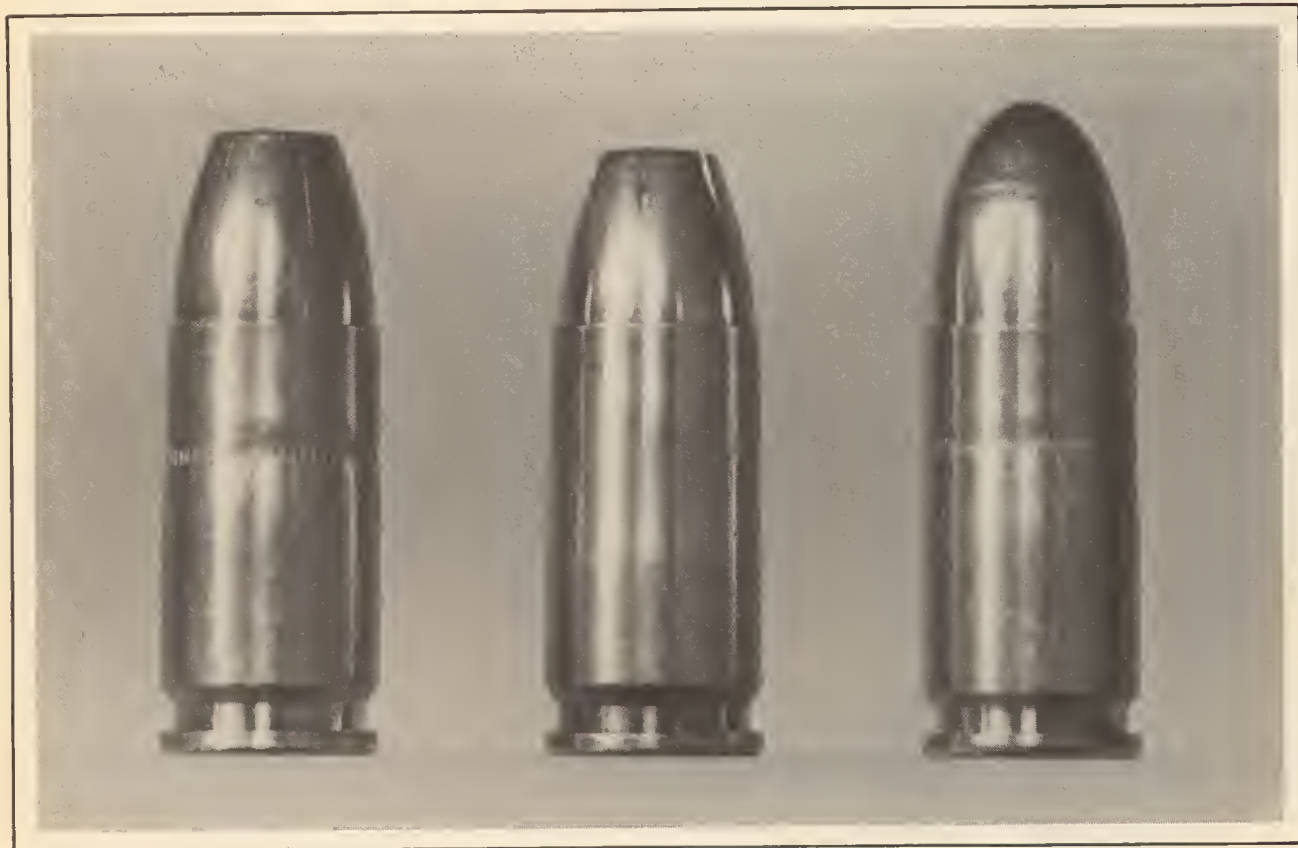
Practice helps an officer accustom himself to this distraction, as does a shift to a heavier gun. The new S&W L-frame is an ideal vehicle for the .357, as is the Ruger GP-100. Both are smaller than the old S&W N-frame, yet stand up to pressure and hard use better than K-frame revolvers.



In the revolver chapter of this book, there's a lengthy discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of many different wheelguns. Nobody would contend that a man was ill-armed with one of these new L-frame Model 681s.

*Wherein Arms Authority Chuck Karwan  
Advances A Novel Theory On Police Handgun Ammo:*

# AUTO CARTRIDGES IN REVOLVERS



*These are examples of the modern loadings of ammunition of the 9mmP cartridge. Usually, they are in the magazines of a host of equally modern automatic pistols. They might be equally at home in revolvers.*

**A**S UNLIKELY as it may seem, the 9mm Parabellum cartridge just might be the best medium-bore revolver chambering available to our law enforcement agencies; yet, this fact goes completely unnoticed by the police community and nearly so by manufacturers.

There is no question that the odds-on favorite police handgun across the country is the medium-bore revolver chambered for either the .38 Special or .357 magnum cartridges. In either chambering, the most popular duty ammunition is one of the various +P .38 Special offerings

with the 125-grain jacketed hollow point and 158-grain lead hollow point, as well as the most effective of the .38 loadings.

Several .357 magnum loadings are popular in certain police circles, with substantial justification, because they have proven to be highly effective one-shot fight-stoppers. This is particularly true of the 125-grain jacketed hollow point loads. However, the drawbacks of the .357 are significant enough that it never has become, nor will it likely ever become, the favored general-issue police revolver cartridge. These drawbacks include heavy recoil, severe muz-



*We were forced to use .45 ACP ammunition in revolvers in World War I. It was the only ammo we had and there weren't enough autos to go around. At the bottom of the page...*

zle blast, a brilliant muzzle flash, high potential for over-penetration, and a socially unacceptable in some areas "magnum" monicker. These drawbacks usually translate into additional training and practice requirements and the use of a heavier revolver to make deployment of the .357 magnum cartridge satisfactory.

There is a superb alternative that has been totally overlooked heretofore — the 9mm Parabellum. This unlikely choice, when employed with the full-moon clip in a revolver, offers a number of significant advantages over the .38 Special or .357 magnum for the law enforcement officer. In my opinion, these advantages are so significant as to make the 9mm Parabellum with full-moon clip the *best* medium-bore revolver cartridge currently available for law enforcement.

The last statement is based on five years experience with the Ruger Speed-Six 9mm with a 2¾-inch barrel, as well as the last year with a similar four-inch barreled specimen.

First, however, it is probably best that I touch a bit on the history of the use of auto pistol cartridges in service revolvers.

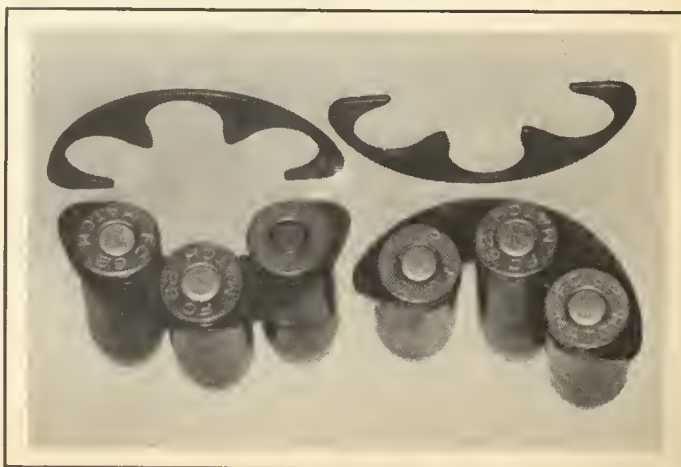
Basically, it dates back to WWI when the U.S. (as usual) found itself with insufficient handguns on hand to fill its wartime needs. The standard handgun of the time was the M1911 autoloading pistol chambered for the rimless .45 ACP cartridge. It was decided to purchase large-frame S&W and Colt revolvers to fill the need, since both companies already were tooled up for their production. The problem lay in the fact that the .45 ACP cartridge did not have a rim for the revolver's ejector star to push against for ejection. An engineer at S&W invented a simple device known as the half-moon clip that solved the problem. It consisted of a "half moon" of flat spring steel notched out to accept the extractor grooves of three .45 ACP cartridges. In effect, it became the rim for three cartridges in a packet. Two such packets loaded one cylinder. More than 300,000 Colt and S&W M1917 .45 ACP revolvers were produced for the U.S. government. The system proved to be totally satisfactory and these same guns saw considerable later use in WWII as well as by the U.S. Border Patrol and U.S. Post Office between the wars.

Colt continued to offer service and target revolvers chambered for .45 ACP until WWII, as did S&W. The latter maker continued to offer a target .45 ACP revolver until just the last few years. Other than a handful of revolvers made in Israel in the 1950s for the 9mm Parabellum, there

had been virtually no activity to put any other rimless cartridge in a service revolver.

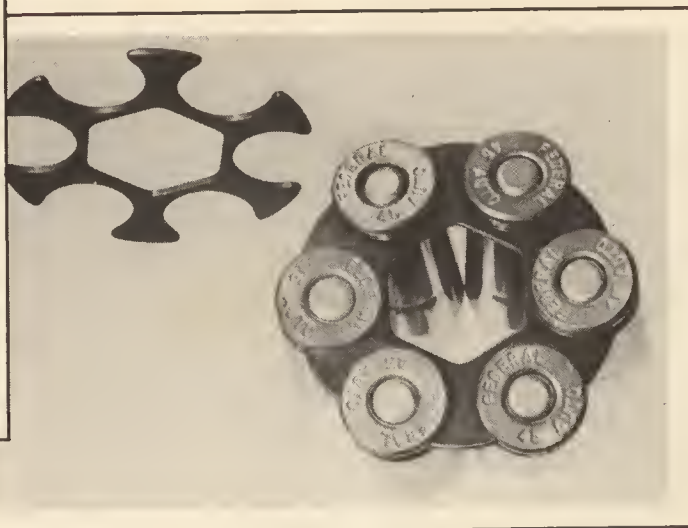
This was the state of things when, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, certain European (particularly French) police officials went through our FBI training courses. They left these courses convinced that revolvers had a great deal to offer for police use, but there was resistance to adopting a new cartridge in Europe. Thus, there was pressure brought on the various U.S. and European revolver manufacturers to come up with a satisfactory 9mm Parabellum service revolver.

*...there's a clever device that made it work. It is called the half-moon clip. Two such clips held a total of six rounds of ammo and allowed the rimless .45s to behave as though they had a rim. They left the gun as a unit.*





Left: Modern high-performance ammunition in the WWI device. There were about 300,000 revolvers made in the .45 ACP chambering. Other guns, principally the Smith & Wesson Model 25-2, were made until recent times. A second look at the old idea produced the device in the lower photo. This is a full-moon clip, superior in some ways to the original versions. It holds all six rounds of ammunition together as a unit. Advantages are obvious.



S&W developed the M547 with a complicated though generally satisfactory ejector star system that allows direct loading and ejection of the rimless 9mm cartridge without the use of half-moon clips. After an abortive attempt to do the same, Ruger chose to adopt S&W's original invention, the half-moon clip. I am not sure who was the first to come up with a six-round full-moon clip for revolvers chambering auto cartridges. The first person that I am aware of to try it out for law enforcement and write about it was Massad Ayoob, who used two half-moon clips welded together in an S&W .45 ACP revolver in his early police work. While Ayoob wrote about several of the advantages of the system, even he appears to have overlooked its considerable potential.

Into this picture enters the Ranch Products Company with completely satisfactory production full-moon clips for not only the various .45 ACP revolvers but also the 9mm Parabellum Ruger revolver. It is the basic advantages of the full-moon clip system that really make the 9mm revolver concept come into its own. In general, that is the background of the 9mm revolver system that I propose is the best medium-bore revolver for law enforcement. I have made my claims; now it is time to back them up.

First, let us take a look at ballistics. It is surprising how many police officers hold the belief that a +P .38 Special is more powerful than a 9mm Parabellum. I guess this is because it is so much bigger. Well, the fact is that 9mm Parabellum outperforms any +P .38 load on the market by a substantial margin in equal barrel lengths. Included here

is a unique ballistics table. It is unique in that all three loads noted were shot in a revolver or in a vented four-inch test barrel that duplicates the effect of a revolver.

.38 Special +P		9mm Para		.357 Mag	
wgt. (grs.)	vel/energy* (ft/sec)/ (ft/lbs)	wgt. (grs.)	vel/energy* (ft/sec)/ (ft/lbs)	wgt. (grs.)	vel/energy* (ft/sec)/ (ft/lbs)
95	1100/255	95	1394/410	NA	NA
110	1020/254	115	1254/401	110	1295/410
125	945/248	123	1092/343	125	1450/583

\*As you can see from the table, in a typical service length four-inch barreled revolver the 9mm outperforms the +P .38 by 100 to 150 foot pounds of energy at the muzzle. Interestingly the 115-grain 9mm loading comes within a hair of equalling the 110-grain .357 magnum loading in a four-inch revolver.

The table also notes that the only load shown that significantly outperforms the corresponding 9mm load is the 125-grain .357. It is obvious that the 9mm in a revolver is no slouch. How about the criticism that "there are no loadings available in 9mm with a bullet weight over 125 grains?" To this I reply, "Who needs them?"

Recently, homicide detective Evan Marshal published a statistical analysis of *actual* shootings with various cartridge loadings. This is data based on real shootings, not





ballistic gelatin, duct seal, clay or other inanimate targets. The single most effective load proved to be the .357 125-grain hollow point. However, it was trailed by only three percentage points by the 9mm Parabellum 115-grain hollow point. Both were well ahead of the best .38 Special load. Besides that, most of the heavier bullet loads — particularly in the .357 — have a high potential for over-

*In what is bound to be a controversial theory, author Karwan contends that there may be less need for heavy bullet loadings of the .38s and .357s than you'd think.*

penetration and consequently endangering innocent bystanders.

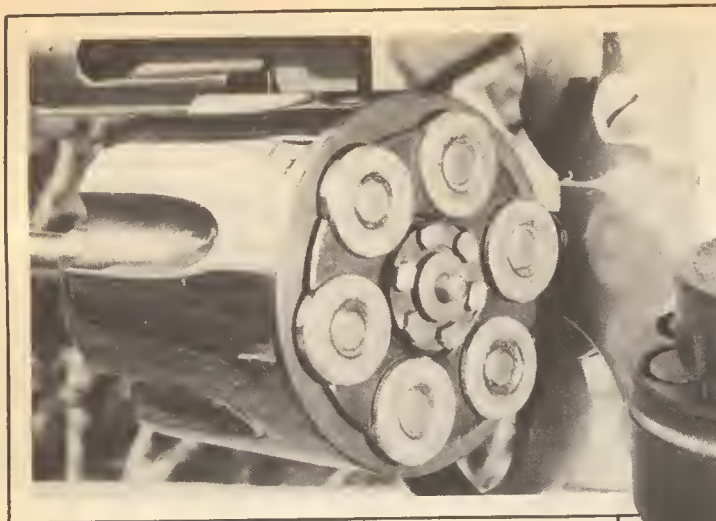
On the other hand, if deep penetration is required as with a barricade or road block situation, the better 9mm full metal jacket 123-grain loads are among the best available for penetration from any handgun. Thus, ballistically, the 9mm offers superior stopping power to any .38 Special load and equals even some .357 magnum loads (110-grain HP). Though the .357 125-grain hollow point has somewhat better stopping power, one pays a high price of substantially heavier recoil, slower recovery time, harsh muzzle blast and severe muzzle flash. While it is true an officer can learn to overcome these drawbacks through training, it also is true that equal training with the 9mm will result in better rapid-fire accuracy and a faster shot-to-shot delivery than the .357 virtually every time. On ballistics alone, the 9mm comes out the better choice, in my opinion. However, the story does not end there.

When the 9mm is used in a full-moon clip, as it can be in the Ruger revolver, a number of other significant advantages to a law enforcement officer reveal themselves. The most obvious of these is that the full-moon clip serves as a simple and compact speed loader with no moving parts. Reloading ease, efficiency and speed with the full-moon clip far exceed that of even the best speed loaders. This is because the shooter is handling a much more compact package and is in direct contact with the cartridges themselves.

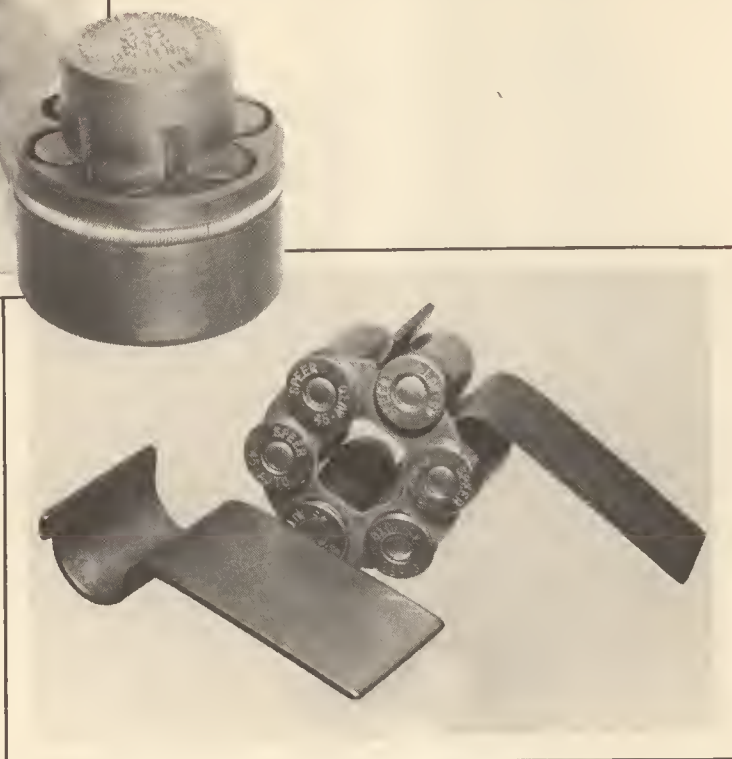
By grasping the loaded full-moon clip with the index finger in the center, I find that my middle finger can touch the tip of two of the cartridges, making it eminently easy to guide the cartridges to their chambers. Such control is not possible with the much longer .38s or .357s in the much bulkier conventional speed loader.

*The revolver is not common, but the ammunition most certainly is. The gun is an Astra, fitted with cylinders in both 9mmP and .357 magnum. In view of the variety of ammo available in each of the two, there's probably sixty different cartridges that will function in this gun.*





*Left: The full-moon clip in use in a new Model 25-2 Smith & Wesson revolver. The .45 ACP is not long, therefore it clears the long S&W cylinder easily. The clipped-together unit of six rounds is compact compared to a typical speed-loading device, like the Dade speedloader in the middle picture. Some speedloader belt pouches will hold three units.*



*The little sheet metal clips aren't particularly fragile, but they can be distorted by improper handling. The maker, Ranch Products, came up with this device to unload the clip. The lever fits as shown, and pops the brass out quickly.*

In general, I find that my best times with full-moon clips are 1½ to two seconds faster than with a conventional speed loader in conditions of good visibility and when looking at the gun. In pitch dark or when loading strictly by feel, the advantage increases by about two more seconds. That alone, my friends, is enough advantage to save your skin in many circumstances.

In addition, the full-moon clip system does not depend upon gravity to load the chambers as do virtually all available speed loaders. Since one is inserting the cartridges directly, the revolver can be at any angle, including straight up. This is a tremendous advantage when an officer is in the prone position behind low cover, and it cuts down the movement required to reload the piece in any circumstance.

The characteristics of the 9mm cartridge and the full-moon clip offer two more advantages in the ejection cycle over the .38 and .357. The most obvious of these is that the shortness of the 9mm cartridge allows the ejector stroke to completely clear the empties from the chambers by a substantial margin. This is not true of many .357s, nor in short-barreled guns of either caliber. It is all too easy with .38s and .357s, particularly under the high stress of a shoot-out, to short-stroke the ejector and/or not have the muzzle pointed straight up, causing an empty casing to fall under the ejector star. This causes a major jam that totally ties up the revolver. More than a few officers have died while desperately trying to clear such jams. With the full-

moon clip, such "under-the-ejector" jams are impossible.

All the aforementioned advantages of the 9mm with a full-moon clip could mean the difference between living or dying in certain circumstances. There are also a couple advantages of the convenience nature. The state-of-the-art in police circles these days is for a uniformed patrolman to carry two full reloads in speed loaders on his belt in two pouches. The shortness of the 9mm and lack of bulk of the full-moon clip allow the same officer to carry a minimum of two and sometimes, depending on the pouch, even three full reloads in one speed loader pouch. This removes one item from the already cluttered patrolman's belt with no loss of efficiency or firepower. Also of a convenience nature is the ease with which an officer can switch from his duty loads to a high-penetration load and back to the duty load when using the full-moon clips. Because, in effect, the rounds never leave their speed loader.

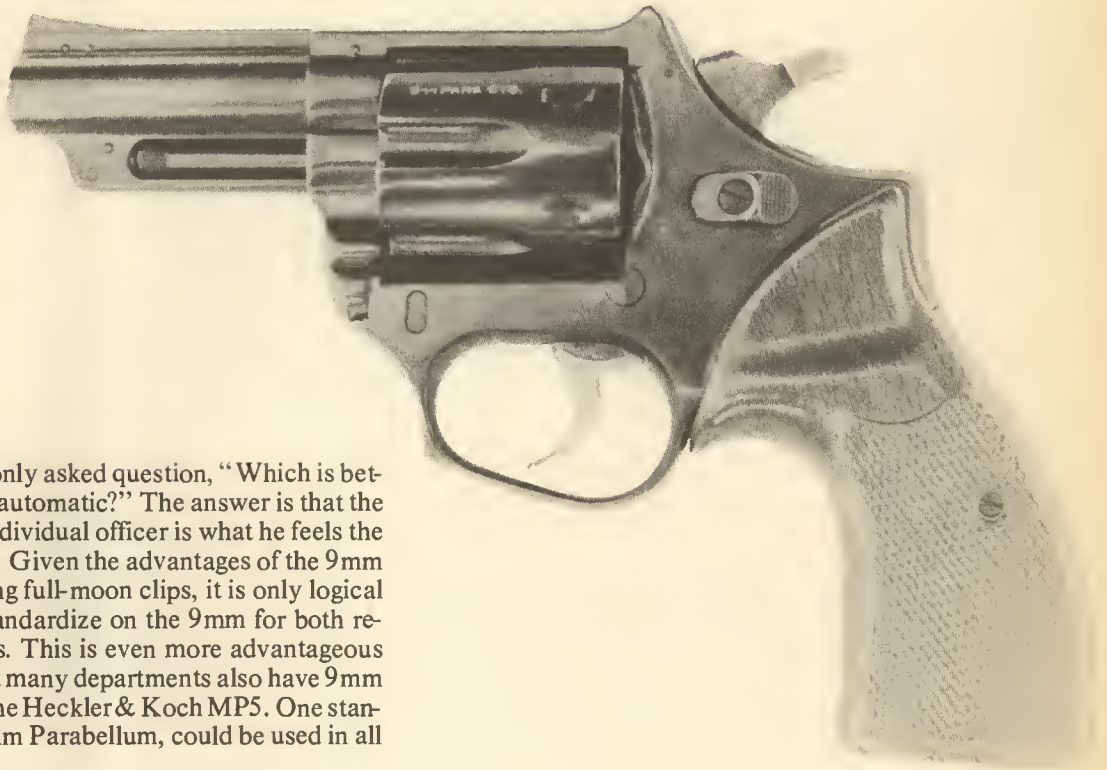
The last advantage of the 9mm and full-moon clip system that I see concerns ammunition compatibility and standardization. The trend in more and more departments and agencies is to go the way of the recent decision of the prestigious Los Angeles Police Department. That contention is that, though the standard sidearm is the .38 Special revolver, those officers who have the desire and initiative to take extra training and undergo additional qualification may use certain 9mm high-capacity double-action autos as their duty arm.

I believe the LAPD approach is the best answer to the





*If you shoot by the "shoot-two; load-two" school, then there are third-moon clips. As seen here, they each hold a pair of rounds so that they drop into the cylinder as a unit. They can also be picked out of the cylinder together, plus they store flat.*



more and more commonly asked question, "Which is better, the revolver or the automatic?" The answer is that the best sidearm for any individual officer is what he feels the most comfortable with. Given the advantages of the 9mm in a revolver when using full-moon clips, it is only logical for a department to standardize on the 9mm for both revolvers and automatics. This is even more advantageous when you consider that many departments also have 9mm submachine guns like the Heckler & Koch MP5. One standardized round, the 9mm Parabellum, could be used in all sidearms and SMGs.

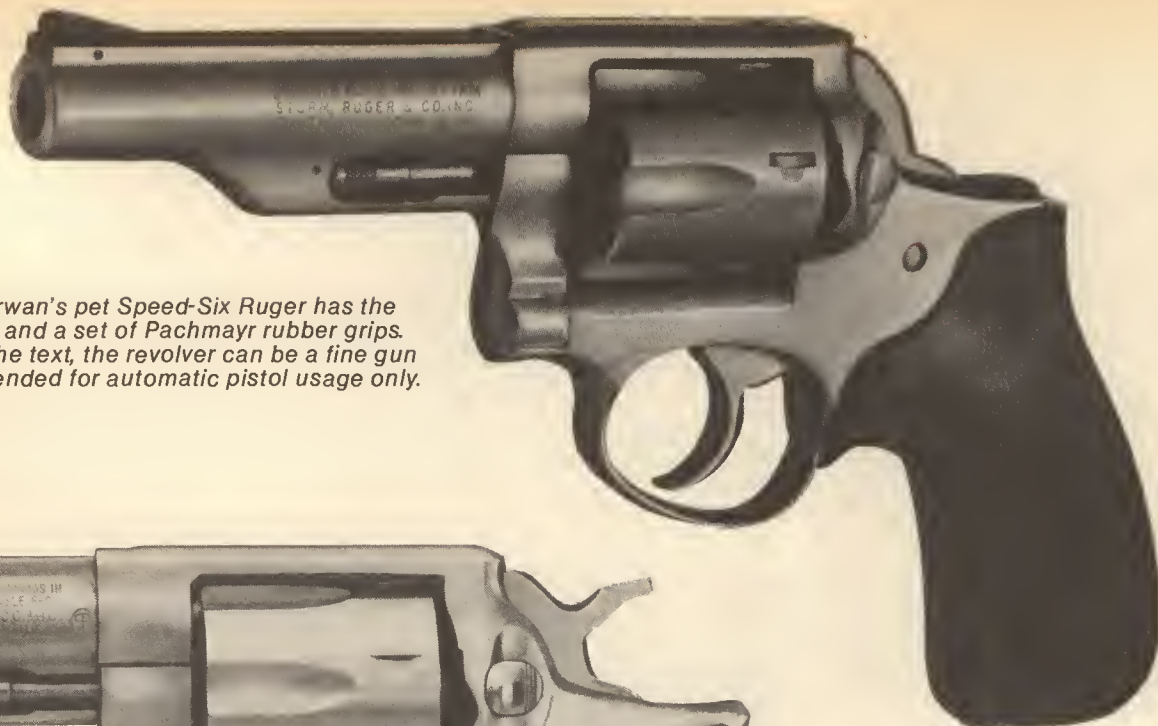
The only drawback I have encountered for the 9mm revolver with the full-moon clip system compared with the conventional revolver cartridge system is for a certain revolver school that teaches "shoot two, reload two." Personally I believe this system is bad, because it increases the chances of a shell under the ejector star jam almost exponentially. When using the full-moon-clip system for a partial reload, one just pockets the partially loaded clip for possible future emergency use while replacing it with a fully loaded clip.

If one must use the "shoot two, reload two" system, the Ranch Products Company has just the ticket for the 9mm revolver. These are called one-third-moon clips that differ from the half-moon and full-moon varieties in that each holds only two rounds. Using the one-third-moon clips in a 9mm revolver makes the "shoot two, reload two" system even easier and safer. The one-third-moon clips will fit in some speed strips and any .38-size belt loops or pouch.

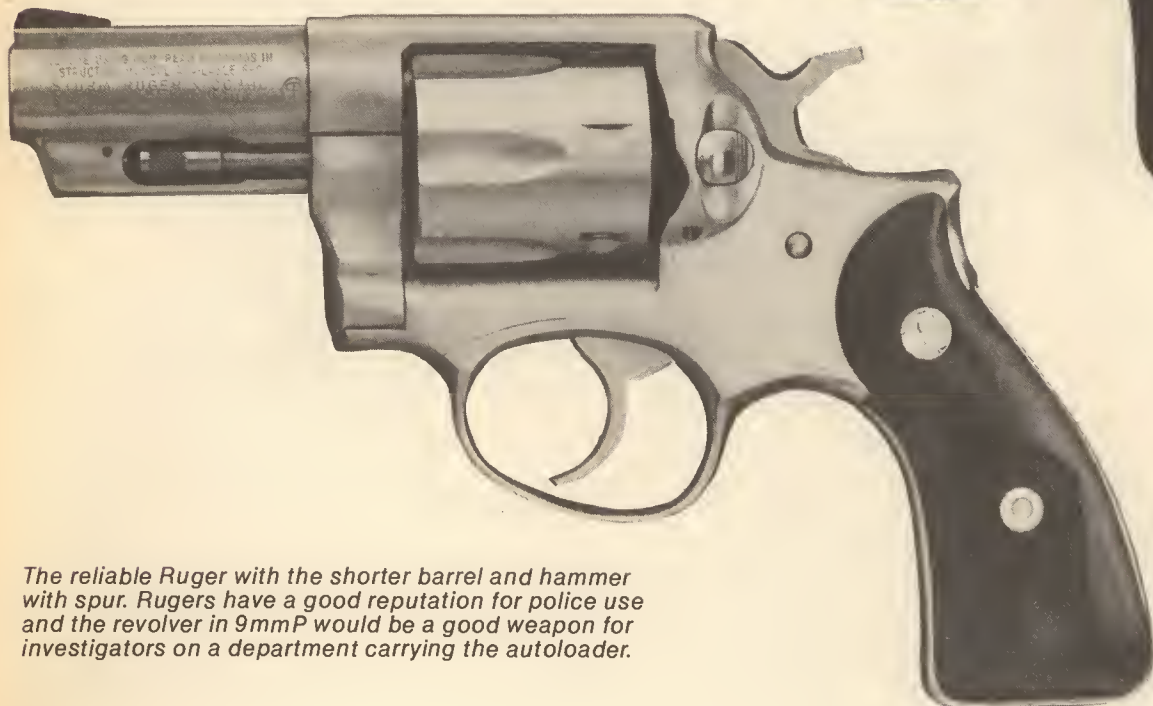
*It's a shame that this Astra revolver was not imported in greater numbers. With two cylinders, the gun would have handled any .38 Special, .357 magnum or 9mmP ammunition. It's the only double-action ever to do so.*

The officer still could use full-moon clips for a fast, full reload. The one-third-moon clips also have a use for plain-clothes officers who might need to carry their reloads in a flat, easily concealed configuration.

As this is written, there is one major stumbling block to using the 9mm revolver. First, Ruger is the only U.S. manufacturer to have offered such a revolver. In Europe, both FN of Belgium and Astra of Spain offer 9mm service revolvers with full-moon clips and Manurhin of France and Korth of Germany offer 9mm service revolver, but I have no idea what ejector system they use.



*Author Chuck Karwan's pet Speed-Six Ruger has the spurless hammer and a set of Pachmayr rubber grips. As discussed in the text, the revolver can be a fine gun for cartridges intended for automatic pistol usage only.*



*The reliable Ruger with the shorter barrel and hammer with spur. Rugers have a good reputation for police use and the revolver in 9mmP would be a good weapon for investigators on a department carrying the autoloader.*

Unfortunately, Ruger dropped the 9mm Parabellum Speed-Six from its catalog in 1985 and it is in limbo at present. All is not lost, however. A Ruger spokesman told me he thought Ruger would put it back into production to offer along with their new P85 semi-automatic 9mm pistol to police departments. It is also Ruger's written policy that if police departments want a variation of the Ruger line that is not cataloged, they will make an effort to produce what is wanted. In this case, since it is a formerly produced and cataloged item, there is little doubt that a department ordering a reasonably large number of 9mm Speed-Six revolvers will have Ruger's full cooperation.

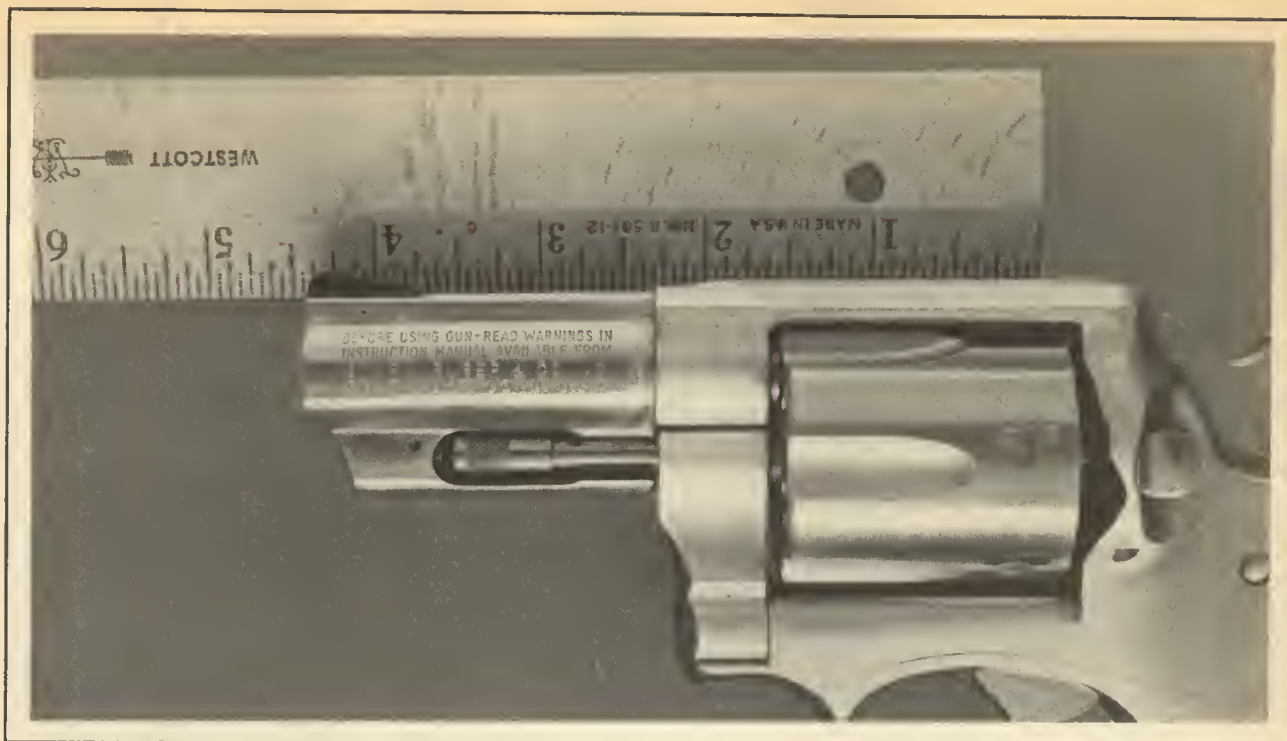
Since S&W has a similar policy regarding departmental orders of non-cataloged items, it would not surprise me if this maker would be equally co-operative in supplying 9mm revolvers set up for full-moon clips. As of now the only source for 9mm full-moon clips is the Ranch Products Company, Box 145, Malinta, OH 43535.

The 9mm service revolver set up for full-moon clips is too good a system to be allowed to fade away. That is my case for the 9mm Parabellum in a service revolver for law enforcement use. A 9mm revolver, using high performance hollow points in full-moon clips, is the *best medium-bore revolver* available for use in law enforcement today.

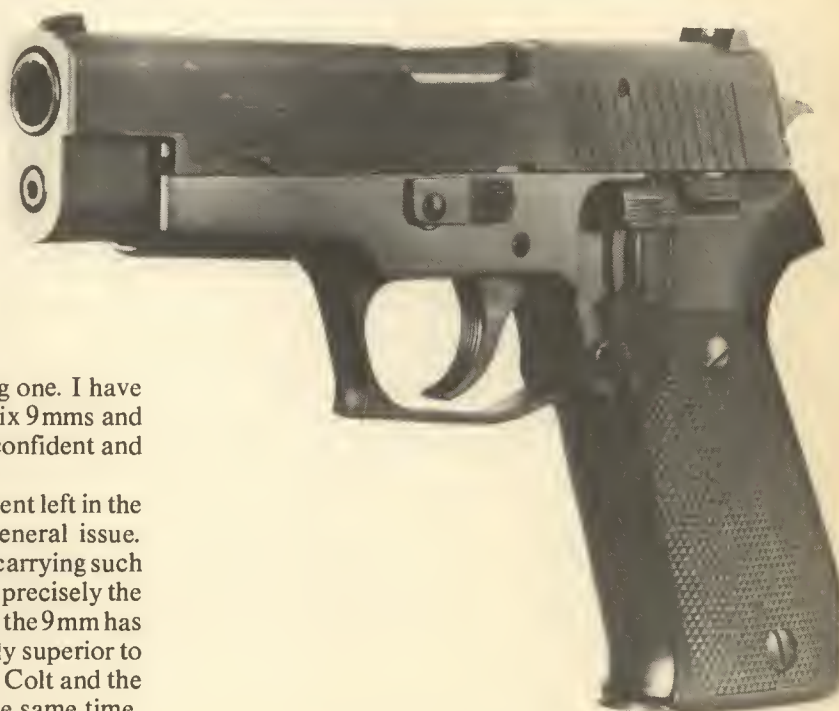
Please note that I do not say it is the best handgun but, rather, the best medium-bore revolver. I make this distinction for two reasons. First, by far the most popular handgun for police use in the U.S. today — and for the unforeseeable future — is the medium-bore revolver. Thus, I want all those departments and agencies who choose the medium-bore revolver to know there is a superior alternative, in my opinion.

Secondly, my own personal preference runs toward the large-bore autoloader, followed by the medium-bore autoloader and the large-bore revolver. However, I will be the first to admit that the case for the medium-bore revolver as





*The camera tricks your eye a little, but the ruler is actually lined up with the rear of the cylinder. This measures the effective barrel length. While the specifications sheet says the revolver has a barrel that's 2 3/4 inches long, it's really almost 4 1/2. Autos are measured in this way — why not revolvers?*



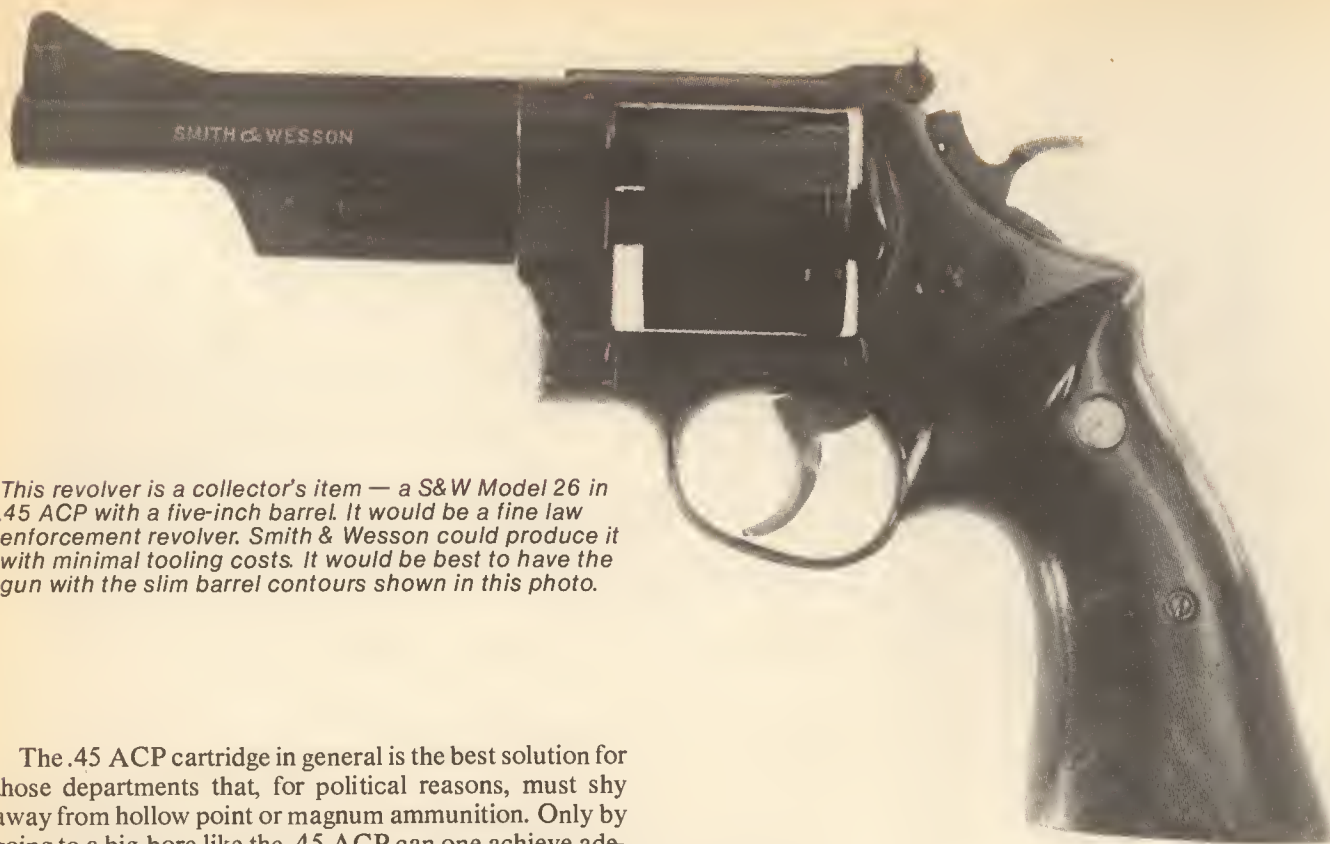
the best handgun for general issue is a strong one. I have become quite attached to my Ruger Speed-Six 9mms and would be reluctant to part with them. I feel confident and well armed when I carry one of them

As far as I can discern, there is no department left in the U.S. that has a large-caliber revolver as general issue. However, there are many individual officers carrying such revolvers. The .45 ACP in full-moon clip has precisely the same advantages in a large caliber revolver as the 9mm has in a medium-caliber revolver. It is ballistically superior to the .44 Special and virtually equal to the .45 Colt and the .41 magnum Police mid-velocity load. At the same time, the .41 magnum full load and all of the .44 magnum loads — including the mid-velocity one — offer entirely too much recoil and potential for over-penetration to make good general-issue service cartridges.

There has been no .45 ACP service revolver produced for some time. The best source is to buy a used S&W M25-2 target revolver and have a gunsmith cut its barrel down to four inches. Now that we have two excellent .45 ACP double-action autos available for law enforcement, the S&W M645 and the new version of the SIG-Sauer P220,

*There are now several fine service .45 ACP automatics on the market. A new .45 ACP revolver would be well received. How about a stainless steel version of the old Model 20 Smith & Wesson? Karwan believes they'd sell.*

S&W should bring out a .45 ACP service revolver along the lines of the old Model 20 in stainless steel. Such a revolver would complement the .45 autoloaders perfectly.



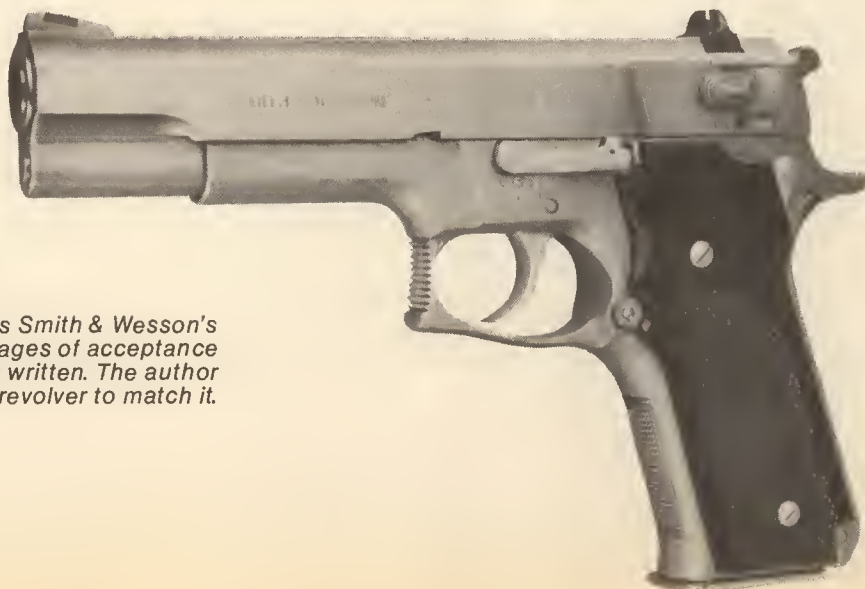
*This revolver is a collector's item — a S&W Model 26 in .45 ACP with a five-inch barrel. It would be a fine law enforcement revolver. Smith & Wesson could produce it with minimal tooling costs. It would be best to have the gun with the slim barrel contours shown in this photo.*

The .45 ACP cartridge in general is the best solution for those departments that, for political reasons, must shy away from hollow point or magnum ammunition. Only by going to a big-bore like the .45 ACP can one achieve adequate stopping power without the use of high-performance hollow pointed ammunition. Again, in my opinion, the .45 ACP using full-moon clips is the *best big-bore revolver* for law enforcement use.

There are two other automatic pistol cartridges that have potential for use in revolvers with full-moon clips. The first of these is the .38 Super. Ballistically, it has a significant edge over the 9mm and can handle heavier bullets. Given a proper revolver and full-moon clips, it could do anything the 9mm does and then some, with all the same advantages.

The problem is that, while the 9mm revolver makes a

nice complement to the proliferation of excellent 9mm automatics being used in law enforcement, such is not the case with the .38 Super. It is available in only two suitable pistols. The first is the Colt Government Model and its spin-offs. The other is the SIG-Sauer P220. As both are also available in .45 ACP, invariably that is the preferred choice. Since there is no satisfactory large capacity double-action .38 Super on the market and the 9mm has been adopted by the U.S. military, I believe we can discount any



*The new stainless steel Model 645 is Smith & Wesson's first .45 auto. It is in the initial stages of acceptance by a number of agencies as this is written. The author contends that we need a .45 ACP revolver to match it.*



significant law enforcement use of the .38 Super cartridge in automatics or revolvers. It has excellent potential, though.

The other auto cartridge that has excellent potential in a revolver is the 10mm cartridge. Now that Colt has brought out a variation of the Government Model in 10mm and it is known that other manufacturers are interested in it, the cartridge is sure to get a law enforcement following in the autoloaders. Its claim to fame is that it offers more wallop than the hottest .357 magnum, yet it has noticeably less recoil when fired in an automatic. It remains to be seen what the recoil would be like in a revolver. The 10mm cartridge is too large to fit in a Ruger Speed-Six or S&W K-frame, but it will fit in the Colt King Cobra/Trooper frame and the L-frame S&W. Equipped with full-moon clips, it would have all those same advantages previously outlined for the 9mm in a revolver as well as true magnum performance.

It is doubtful whether such a powerful revolver would

ever become a popular general-issue police sidearm, but it would make a better choice than the .357 magnum for those law enforcement officers that presently need and/or carry fully loaded .357s. It also would outperform all the big-bore revolver cartridges, except the hotter .41 and .44 magnum loads which are not practical for law enforcement anyway. All this would be in a package quite a bit smaller and handier than the bulky S&W N-frame used for all the big-bore rounds. I hope there is someone out there at Colt and S&W paying attention. A medium-frame 10mm revolver with full-moon clips would be the answer to many a policeman's prayer and it's not even a magnum!

Regardless of whether it's 9mm Parabellum, 45 ACP or even 10mm, the law enforcement community should consider the possibilities and advantages of employing auto rounds in revolvers. When combined with the full-moon clip, the advantages to the police officer carrying them are considerable and should not be ignored. — *Chuck Karwan*

*This revolver and the clips which go with it are 9mmP. It would not be impossible to produce the gun and the clips in 10mm. Since Colt has decided to make the familiar Government Model in 10mm, there is plenty of logic for revolvers in that caliber. How about making the best: the Colt King Cobra, Ruger GP100 or S&W L-frame as "Tens?" They would need a new size clip,*





## CHAPTER SIX

# POLICE HOLSTERS

*The Problem Of Handgun Security  
And Ease Of Draw  
Is Gradually Being Solved*



*The uniformed lieutenant at left prefers a high riding, pancake-type holster snugged in tight at his side. Joe Kirkpatrick still finds a market for his older K-72 model, which accepts most four-inch revolvers.*

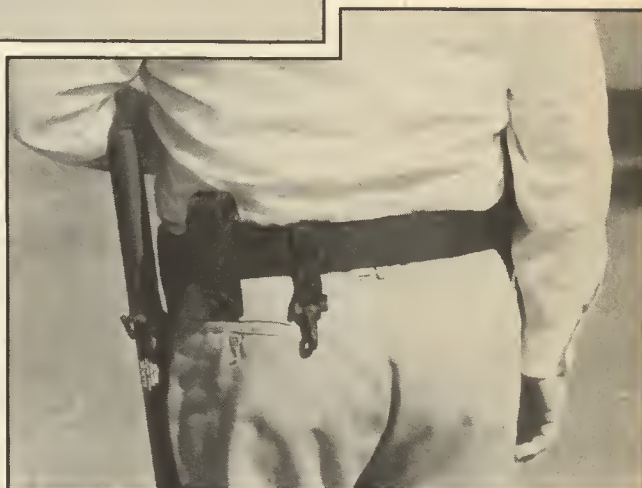




*At right: Bianchi's Model 6000 Ranger Hurricane II is a semi-front-opening, snatch-resistant holster.*



*One of the early manufacturers of nylon fabric holsters and belts is Michaels of Oregon. New full-flap holster, above, matches police or sportsman gear. Velcro-locked flap is fast off.*



*A full set of matching pouches, snaps and belts, all made of nylon material, is available from Michaels. Maintenance requirements for nylon material are minimal, initial cost reasonable.*

**T**HERE ARE trends evident in law enforcement handgun holsters, two of which stand out above all. One is the recent movement toward the use of materials other than leather for the holsters, belts and pouches which every officer, uniformed or plain-clothes, must carry. The second is a design trend toward safer, nearly snatch-proof holsters.

The leather substitutes are broken into two groups: those that are produced of materials which look, feel and smell like leather and those which make no effort to be anything but what they are. And that means they most likely are made of nylon cloth.

The man-made look-alikes seem to be losing ground in the popularity poll. Materials such as Corfam, which saw some use in shoes, particularly uniform shoes, a couple of decades ago, the more recent Porvair, and Smith & Wesson's Wessonhide now see limited usage in some specialized applications. But for the most part, those materials have not become as popular as leather nor have they approached the runner-up, padded nylon fabric.

When nylon holsters first were introduced, there seemed to be considerable opposition to their use in many departments and other jurisdictions. The original use of nylon gear was by sportsmen, hunters and target shooters. They

quickly realized that the gear was lightweight, quiet and inexpensive.

There was — and still is — opposition to leather substitutes in some quarters, especially nylon, based on aesthetic, subjective reasons. Most cops like the smell, feel and sound of good leather. A uniformed police officer is on display when on duty and nothing looks sharper than matching black basketweave Sam Browne gear, all neatly aligned and polished. That is the ideal, but not everybody achieves the ideal.

Several things have happened to help nylon police equipment gain acceptance in many departments. In locations with budget restrictions — and there are few public departments without them — the relative low cost of the nylon gear is a major factor. Nylon gear usually costs about half the price of leather. Nylon will last a long time, as it is impervious to some of the deteriorating factors which affect leather: perspiration, saltwater, heat, cold and most corrosive chemicals. Nylon may be more susceptible to abrasion damage, but it is easier to care for and never needs polishing. Good materials will not fade nor do colors run.

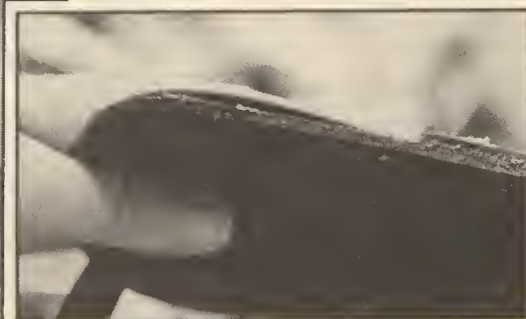
There are no color restrictions for products made of nylon material. Black is the most popular with uniformed



*Bianchi International is one of the primary law enforcement suppliers of complete, matching leather Sam Browne gear. Auto Draw pistol holster, above, has proven popular with many agencies.*



*At left: Bianchi also offers full line of nylon fabric police gear to match new Hurricane II holster.*



*A look at the cross-section of an unfinished Bianchi nylon fabric holster reveals the smooth material against the gun and the closed-cell foam sandwiched between outer cloth.*

police and SWAT personnel, but the holsters and belts may be brown, gray, olive drab for the military, any camouflage pattern that can be dreamed up, ceremonial white, green, blue, or any combination and mixture thereof. Nylon gear in black has gained acceptance with several departments and private security agencies which previously tended to ignore it.

Another advantage of nylon is its light weight compared to leather. Uniformed police know they are required to pack along a lot more gear than a simple belt, holster and handgun. Worn openly on most police belts are such items as key rings, handcuffs, extra ammunition, magazines or speed loaders, batons, flashlights, tear gas cannisters, knives and small two-way radios. These are considered safety and life-saving items, carried within easy reach, ready when needed. Even before the introduction of nylon gear,

the trend was to lighten the policeman's load as much as possible without eliminating some essential piece of equipment. The gear will weigh the same, but when carried in nylon containers, the total load will be noticeably less.

Another element which favors nylon holsters is cost — or relative lack of it. In many jurisdictions, cost is a major consideration. A large police force of five hundred, a thousand or more officers requires plenty of dollars to keep it outfitted. One will find more use of nylon holsters in private security companies than in most large law enforcement agencies.

Some officers, some departments, some police chiefs and county sheriffs never will change from leather. Others, however, are being forced into the changeover. Some have come to appreciate all the advantages of nylon over leather. A final factor which has tipped the scales in favor of



*Bianchi's military revolver model is adapted from M12 military pistol holster, available in various colors. Belt fastener is designed for web or pistol belt use, but fits all others.*



*The nylon and Porvair laminate, above, provides a secure, easy-drawing police holster in black. Thumb snap safety strap has dummy button on lower end, at finger.*



*Rear view of Hurricane II shows three rivets fastening metal-reinforced belt loop and what company calls a Belt Lock to prevent holster from sliding during the draw, similar to leather Hurricane model. It accepts most four-inch guns.*



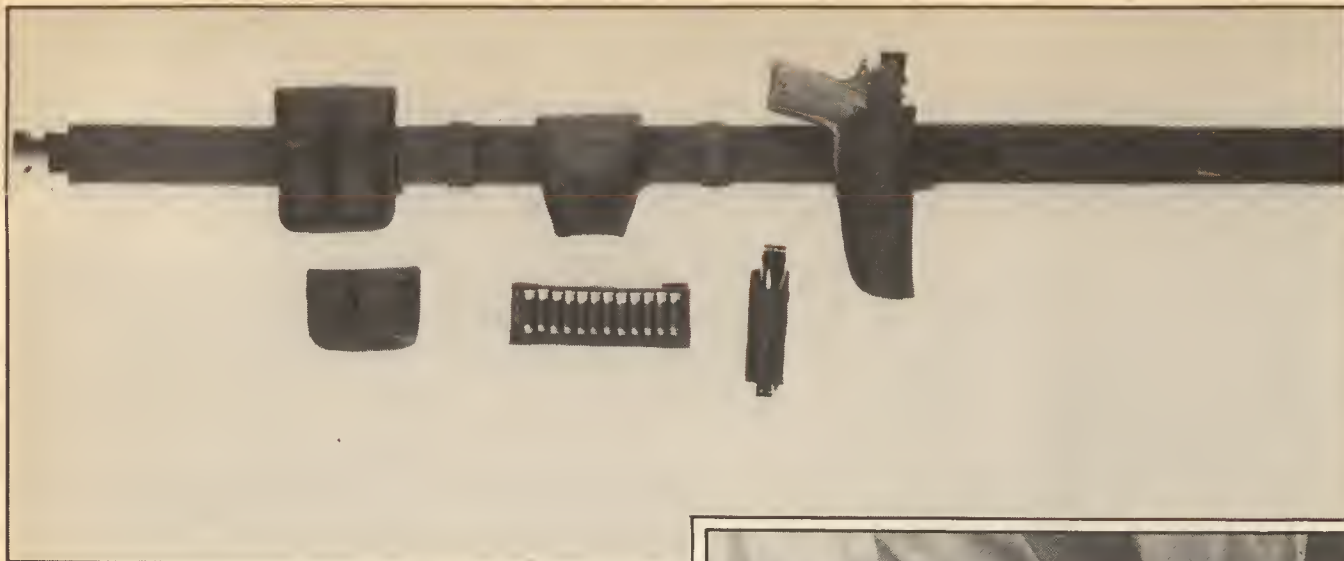
nylon gear is the modern appearance of most of it. Early on, there were companies sewing nylon police gear which produced ugly-looking products. The stuff looked amateurish and unprofessional. No matter what the cost, good leather equipment easily beat out the nylon. Much of that early gear looked like fat pockets hanging on a black web belt. The nylon thread was likely to pull loose and the cloth frayed easily.

Recently though, this has changed, leading to even greater acceptance of the nylon holster. The quality of the product has improved with new production techniques and better materials. Just as importantly, the cosmetic appearance of the belts, holsters, holders and pouches has improved dramatically. The gear now looks like it is supposed to.

Michaels of Oregon was one of the first to experiment and produce nylon holsters. Ten products were targeted at

sportsmen, later finding their way into police squad rooms. Sportsmen who carry a handgun while hunting or fishing appreciate the light weight and the quietness of such holsters.

Today, Michaels holsters are constructed of a patented laminate of tough Cordura nylon on the outside, a waterproof closed-cell foam in the center and smooth nylon lining on the inside. A tough nylon web safety strap, sewn permanently to the back, can be released quickly by means of a combination snap and adjustable buckle on the front. A nylon web sight tunnel to protect the holster from sharp sight blades runs full length inside the holster. The full-flap model can be converted to an open top simply by removing the flap, held to the holster body by Velcro material. A full line of matching police accessory holders and duty belts is available.



*The Texas company, Southwind Sanctions, also offers a complete police rig in nylon fabric, above. At right, Los Angeles County SWAT member has adopted Bianchi military holster for operational wear, slung low on thigh.*

Assault Systems has had a line of nylon shooting gear for several years, although this company's primary emphasis has been on shotgun and rifle cases. SWAT teams will be familiar with their longarm cases; they have become popular with the hunting crowd, as well.

As with other nylon holster makers, Assault Systems' duty police rigs feature accessories for carrying flashlights, speed loaders, loose cartridges, handcuffs and batons. All the pouches and the holster slide onto the nylon belt for added security. The security strap on the holster has a dummy snap visible on the outside. Actual release of the strap is controlled by the thumb, the release being located on top of the holster, against the body. Assault Systems' holster also has a sewn-in sight channel for the front sight blade. Models are available for pistols or revolvers.

Development of nylon police equipment has opened the door to many new manufacturers, large and small. Some have come and gone, but one that has a full line of nylon gear is Southwind Sanctions. This maker's Everwear police equipment line includes the standard duty belt, holster and various pouches and keepers, all made of black nylon, lined with suede. Fasteners are either Velcro or Fastex quick-release designs.

One of the newest designs is a drop holster of the type popular with SWAT personnel. The pistol is carried well down on the thigh, rather than at the hip with provision for an extra magazine on the outside of the holster. Easily adjustable, the holster-mounting portion clips to any belt.

One of the industry giants, Bianchi International, entered the nylon holster business rather late, then moved ahead rapidly. Bianchi's newest police holster, the Model



6000 Ranger Hurricane II, is intended for the same usage as their black leather Hurricane model. The leather version has been popular in many large police agencies for several years.

The original Hurricane is a blend between a conventional top-draw holster and a full front-opening design. The front spring opening reaches halfway down the holster, leaving the remainder closed. The front opening, the partially closed front, the trigger guard strap and the thumb





*Left and above: Some Special Weapons and Tactics personnel have come to favor the thigh-level holster, kept out of harm's way. The Southwind Sanctions nylon fabric holster hangs from belt and adds leg straps, ample position adjustments.*

snap opening all combine to help retain the revolver, while allowing a quick draw by the officer. Equally as important, re-holstering is a one-handed proposition.

The nylon Hurricane II works in the same way except that it weighs considerably less. It features a three-part laminate of ballistic nylon cloth exterior and leather-substitute Porvair interior. Between the two materials is a high-impact moulded thermoplastic shell to add strength and rigidity. The sweeping retainer strap and thumb snap are polymer, also black. The holster is designed to handle most four-inch barrel, medium and medium-large double-action revolvers.

The Hurricane and Hurricane II both feature a jacket-style belt loop. The belt loop is metal-reinforced, permit-

ting the gun to stand out from the body in the same location all the time and allowing a short uniform jacket to fall down into the space between the belt loop and the inside of the holster. A full set of nylon accessories for a full Sam Browne belt rig is available to match the Hurricane II.

The intention of every manufacturer of police holsters is to give the officer as much of an advantage as possible. The uniform handgun must be carried safely, be protected from the elements and abrasion and, most of all, be safe from a quick snatch by a felon. The gun must be in the same location, hung at the same angle, providing the same feel and release to the officer for each and every draw. It must not shift or swivel, leaving the officer groping for a gun grip which has moved out of position.

*Smith & Wesson holster, right, now produced by firm called Gould and Goodrich, combines Wessonhide, nylon and suede leather in this model. Top safety strap has adjustable length.*



*Ted Blocker designed the holster below specifically for military Beretta 9mm pistol, in use by Los Angeles Police Department.*



It would be simple to design an absolutely snatch-proof holster. The trouble is that nobody — including the officer — could draw a gun from it. Making the gun easy to draw for the officer, one invites unauthorized gun-snatch. A happy medium is needed.

Every year, according to FBI statistics, some police officers are shot with their own weapons. A felon may grab the gun from behind or pull it out of the officer's holster while wrestling on the street. The bad guys know how to do it. They can learn all the tricks needed to overcome the so-called safety holsters in any prison.

Holster makers are aware of the need for designing a safe, easy-to-use law enforcement holster. Several techniques have been tried; not all have been successful. Early design placed the safety strap release on the inside, against the body, where it is easy to reach only by the wearer. Often, a dummy snap is left on the outside of the holster, making it appear to the uninitiated that the strap is released by pulling up on the outer end of the strap. Such a mistake gives the officer a little time to take effective action. Typical of that design is what is universally called the Jordan Border Patrol holster. The design has been popular with law enforcement personnel for years.

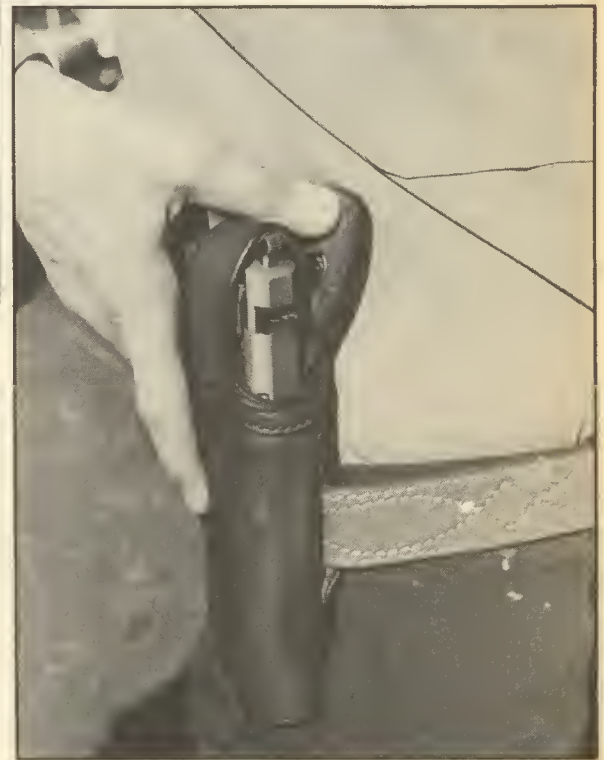
A dummy safety strap is only the beginning of safe holster design. The modern Border Patrol holster uses metal reinforcement in the belt loop to place the gun stock slightly away from the body, always in the same location for the hand. It is comfortable to wear in a vehicle, in the





*Don Hume's Model H722 Bulldog places pistol high on hip, close to body. Holster may be worn as straight or crossdraw. Similar Bulldog style is available for revolvers.*

*Bulldog holster is fully suede lined to protect gun's finish. Smith & Wesson Model 645 fits snugly; thumb snap is released in first step of draw, as shown below.*



office, when walking a beat or climbing a fence in hot pursuit.

An innovation tried by some, but found wanting, was an adjustable tension screw on a standard Border Patrol-type holster. The tension screw made it easier or more difficult to draw the revolver out of the holster. In actual use, the screw tended to loosen with each draw; after ten or fifteen times, the gun could simply fall out of the holster during physical exertion.

The gun must come out of the holster fast and without a hitch for an accurate first shot. If the holster requires too many different motions to get the gun out, something may go wrong while the officer is in a stressful situation and the gun may be slow to come out. It could cost the officer his life.

There is always a compromise between accuracy and speed when shooting. The holster shouldn't slow the draw. The officer may not always be standing straight up, facing

the suspect, either. The gun has to come out of the holster from any position in which the officer finds himself: lying on the ground, on either his side or back; lying on his stomach; crouching; sitting; or in any other possible physical situation. The gun must remain secure in the holster in such situations, until purposely drawn by the officer.



*In black basketweave finish, the Hume 735, above, presents a smart, professional look.*



*Hume 735, left, designed to leave room for uniform jacket between belt loop and revolver butt. Belt loop and thumb strap are metal lined.*

*The Hume Bulwark 901, below, is a low profile thumb-break design for good protection.*



*At right: Model 735 metal-reinforced thumb snap has been released and gun is about halfway out of holster.*

The wearer should not depend upon the so-called safety strap to hold the gun in the holster. The gun should stay holstered with the safety strap unsnapped through all types of violent activity. That is a tall order but is afforded considerable attention by manufacturers and holster users alike.

One of the safest holster designs seems to be one which requires certain specific movements to withdraw the gun. These movements must be easy for the officer, but difficult for anyone attempting a snatch.

The holster is set up first to provide the optimum angle of draw by the wearer only, the draw requiring certain specific motions. For instance, the gun butt may have to be rocked

to the rear or to the front to release it from its internal hold, then a partial upward withdrawal is followed by a push forward out of the holster. Other combinations of movements have been tried. The officer must learn the proper sequence of these required moves and become flawlessly proficient to avoid having the gun hang up in what amounts to a complicated safety holster. When such a holster model is new to the officer, he or she must practice diligently to become proficient. Otherwise, the holster could become a hindrance instead of an aid.

Every manufacturer strongly recommends plenty of practice with a new snatch-resistant holster. As many as a hundred draws in preliminary practice is a beginning. Start





*Thumb break strap of Bulwark is curved around front of gun, snapping well inside holster, near wearer's side. After thumb snap is opened, gun is rocked slightly forward before drawing.*

*Hume Bulwark is open about halfway down front for faster release from holster. Once the muzzle has cleared the slot, gun is pushed forward through opening into quick aim.*



slowly to accustom the muscles to the movement, then work for speed as the motion becomes smoother. Daily practice before a mirror for the first month or two of ownership is recommended.

A few years ago, Smith & Wesson decided to divest itself of its leather goods division. At the time, the company had an almost-new leather working facility in North Carolina that offered sports and police gear, with holsters to fit any S&W pistol or revolver. Many departments preferred to match the holster brand to the sidearm brand. When S&W gave up on the line, two partners, one a long-time Smith & Wesson employee, took over the operation. Now, Gould and Goodrich continue with production of holsters and belts, marketing them under the S&W name. The new firm has carried on with leather and Wessonhide, while experimenting in nylon fabric holsters.

A not-surprising number of today's large holster makers were once law enforcement officers themselves. Don Hume was a policeman in Southern California, but now headquarters in Miami, Oklahoma, where he puts out a complete line of leather goods, primarily for the law enforcement market.

There are several departments that specify brown leather gear, primarily in the South and Southwest. These are

primarily sheriff departments and a number of private agencies. Hume's new Bulldog line accommodates those officers with models available for either revolvers or auto-loading pistols. The Model H722 is a heavy-duty plain brown holster which may be worn on the strong side or crossdraw, in uniform or concealed. In addition to the standard sewn belt loop, the holster is also slotted in the rear. The slot is located 1½ inches behind the regular belt loop, so the holster may be snugged tightly against the body for greater concealment. The H722, like all of Hume's holsters, is moulded for the respective handgun for which it is intended and is fully suede leather lined.

The top of the holster is leather and thread reinforced for strength and appearance. The top strap has a thumb-break feature with the female snap recessed into the inside strap to protect gun metal.



*Lawrence calls this holster the Parabellum, in black basketweave with Sam Browne belt and matching accessories. It is a standard thumb-break design with double belt loop slots.*



*Gun is drawn from Lawrence Parabellum left and below, by pulling straight up. Holster is cut about two inches down in front for fast draw.*



*Model 070 Rogers SSIII security holster, above, requires practiced moves to get the gun out. Two snaps must be released before pistol is rocked rearward and drawn upward.*

Those armed with a standard four-inch-barrel duty revolver may wish to consider the Hume 735. It is available in plain black or brown, in basketweave brown or black, or in Clarino black. The 735 features a standard thumb-break safety strap which is steel reinforced on top. The belt loop, too, is steel reinforced to present the gun butt in the same location in every situation. The holster has a straight drop with an open bottom. The draw is straight up and out.

Don Hume's latest design for law enforcement is his Bulwark Model H901-SH. Security is achieved with his low profile thumb-break and recessed cylinder. Rather than coming across the top of the revolver, the thumb-break strap is at the front of the holster, crossing over the top, rather than the rear of the hammer. A snatch is less likely, but the draw is easy for the wearer. To draw, the gun first is moved slightly forward, then up and out of the holster. Re-holstering may be done with one hand, without looking, an important consideration. The 901 Bulwark is available in the same color and finish combinations as the 735 and the belt loop also is steel reinforced. The front of the holster is open about halfway down. The Model H901-SH rides slightly lower and a bit farther from the body than the Model H901. Both have the same outward appearance, however.

More than 130 years ago, George Lawrence started making holsters, belts and saddles for cowboys, soldiers

and lawmen of the Old West. His great-grandson, Bill Lawrence, continues making handmade leather goods for sportsmen and law enforcement.

For the officer armed with an auto-loading pistol, the Lawrence 209 Parabellum holster is made in several sizes to fit medium- and large-frame pistols. The 209 features a leather sight channel, a thumb-break safety strap and a heavy, stitched welt. The belt slot offers a high ride and has





*Safariland Model 275 break-through holster, above and right, holds revolver until wrap-around safety strap is released. Gun is held by cylinder recess.*



*Minute Man high ride holster has reasonable price going for it; it's used by Secret Service.*



*Smith & Wesson's Model 11 provides a high ride for medium and large-frame pistols. It is available in plain or basketweave, black or russet brown.*

provisions for tight fit on either 1½-inch or 2¼-inch duty belts. It is available in plain or basketweave black. The draw is straight up and out. Lawrence does custom leather work, too, for those who need it.

Not every law enforcement holster company is a giant such as Bianchi, Hume or Safariland. A smaller outfit, making a name because of the lower prices of the products, is Minute Man Leather. They offer one basic design, with models to fit most popular law enforcement handguns. The Minute Man is said to be currently in use by the U.S. Secret Service. The design is high-ride, with belt loops snug-ging it close in to the body. No safety strap or thumb snap is used, the holster relying instead on its moulded fit to keep the gun in place. As of early 1987, the holsters were retailing for under \$30, with custom work an additional \$10.

In 1985, Safailand joined with Rogers Holsters to combine technology and design expertise. This combine has come up with some high-tech holsters and equipment which have won acclaim. Bill Rogers is an ex-law enforcement officer active in international pistol competition. He has some advanced ideas on holster design, some of which have spilled over into the police holster business.

One of the newer models is the Model 070 Rogers SSIII Security holster. The holster is made for revolvers or auto-loading pistols and is constructed of Safariland's Safari-Laminate. The holster has a soft suede lining against the gun, then the Safari-Laminate, a light, durable plastic which retains the gun's shape indefinitely. The outer layer is of Porvair. On some other Safariland holsters, the outer layer is full-grain leather. The lamination system allows the holster to be moulded precisely for the particular gun model it holds and is said to weigh about one-third less than an all-leather equivalent.

The Rogers 070 SSIII is a high-ride holster with a metal-



*Safariland Model 285 Eliminator holster is made of three-layer Safari-Laminate for light weight, added strength. It presents clean appearance.*



*Grip of gun butt in Safariland Model 285 is a bit farther back than it would be on standard thumb-snap design. Middle finger opens snap.*



*Milt Sparks has a loyal law enforcement following with his basic design. Revolver is held in AZR model by combination thumb-break strap and an adjustable welt which changes pressure on gun.*

reinforced belt loop. The holster opens at the back, being held shut by a strong spring. Drawing from this holster is a three-step process; each step must be precise or the gun will not pull free. Proficiency requires considerable practice. There are *two* security snaps to open before the gun can be moved in the holster. The first is a standard thumb snap, pressed open in the usual manner. Then the middle finger of the gun hand presses inward against the body to release the second snap.

At this point, the gun is rocked rearward, slightly parting the rear opening, and the gun is drawn upward out of the holster. No holster is completely snatch-proof, but this one comes close. It is likely that only the wearer could perform the three steps in exact sequence. The SSIII is available in black, plain or basketweave finish.

The Safariland Model 275 MK II break-through holster also is made of Safari-Laminate with a Porvair outer surface. In black or brown, it is available for common four- and six-inch revolvers. The Safari-Laminate material, rather than metal, holds the front of the holster shut. Chamber recesses inside the holster help hold the revolver in place as does the thumb snap. The safety thumb snap is curved to the shape of the holster and, unless it has been released by the officer, the gun cannot rock forward to be drawn through the opening. The Model 275 is available with or without a jacket slot belt loop.

Safariland's Model 285 Eliminator has properties similar to those of the two holsters just discussed. Made of the same materials and available for the same revolvers, the safety strap, however, is released by the middle finger, rather than the thumb. This model, too, requires considerable practice before it should be worn on duty. This is especially true for officers who may be used to a thumb-break holster.





*Here is the rear view of the opening move shown on opposite page. Note how middle finger presses inward against snap strap. Metal reinforces leather strap and curved belt loop. Holster is suede lined, while pressure on gun is adjustable.*

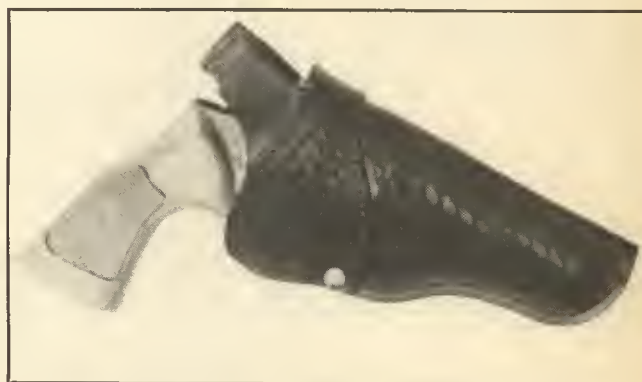


*Front-opening Safariland Model 275 offers fast draw through slot, held firmly by Safari-Laminate construction, not metal spring.*

The Eliminator is cut down in front about halfway, with the same cylinder recesses as the Model 275. Both have adjustable tension screws to alter the pressure of the sides of the holster against the gun. Once learned, the technique of unsnapping in the rear, lifting straight up at first, then rapidly rocking and pushing the barrel through the opening becomes fast and smooth. Re-holstering a revolver in the Model 285 Eliminator is a simple, one-handed proposition.

Another small manufacturer that has found favor with policemen and women is Milt Sparks, from up Idaho way. His AZR revolver duty holster is made of top-grade leather; optional basketweave stamping is done by hand. The AZR rides high, securing the revolver with a combination of thumb snap and an adjustable-tension welt. The thumb-break strap protects the rear sight and the covered trigger guard provides added protection in the field.

Strong Hosters calls their security design the Preventor. The Model 934 is a high-ride holster made of quality leather and in styles to fit most common revolvers and auto-loading pistols. The trigger guard is protected with a double layer of leather for safety and security. The outer layer of leather wraps around the holster to create a recessed sight protector and, in back, provides a unique belt slot design for either 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch or 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch belts. The thumb snap is



*The Strong Model 934 Preventor rides high and has metal-reinforced double welt. Unusual dual belt channels accommodate either 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch or standard 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch belts. Rear sight is protected.*

reinforced with metal and the shape is recessed to prevent metal damage to the gun as it is drawn or holstered. The Preventor is available in black or brown, plain or basketweave, lined or unlined. Strong, incidentally, is now the manufacturer of the Roy's Pancake holsters.

The problem of unauthorized gun grabs can be solved only by officer alertness and training and by forward-thinking manufacturers who can produce nearly snatch-proof holsters. Everyone will have to do his part. — Roger Combs



## CHAPTER SEVEN

*Handguns Are Fine, But When Real Trouble's Really Comin,' Real Cops Reach For The...*



# SHOTGUNS!

**R**IOT GUN is a hopeless misnomer, but a useful one that bears close examination. A riot is an out-of-control situation in which some aggrieved segment of society chooses to reject the constraints imposed by custom, law and common sense. Without passing any judgment whatsoever on the justice of whatever point of view motivated their actions, it nevertheless follows that rioting — wanton destruction of property and assaults on people — must be stopped. Nothing ever seems to be resolved by a riot; rioters can't discuss their problem while in the act of firebombing a building or overturning a bus. The violence that typifies a riot just can't be allowed to continue.

So it is the lot of the policemen to stop the riot, to restore order in a situation that is volatile to say the least. History fails to record many riots stopped by carefully worded explanations of the inadvisability of riotous behavior. You have to use force. In the past several decades, American policemen have developed ways of dealing with riots that are exceptionally efficient. Often, through the use of tear gas, good tactics, and other procedures, a riot can be brought under control with little injury or loss of life. It was not always so; from these earlier times comes the term riot gun.

A riot gun is a gun the police use to stop a riot, a gun that is brought out of the weapons lockers as a last resort, a gun



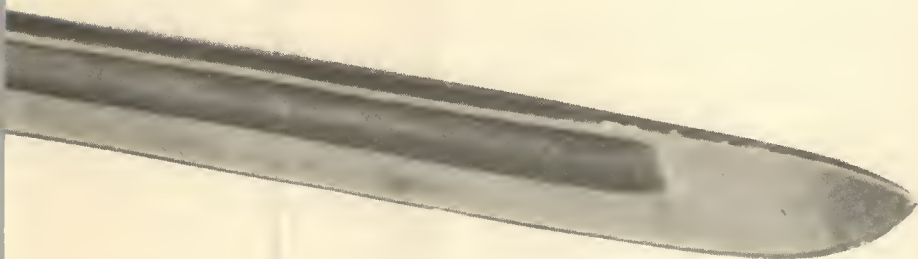
with an immediate and overwhelming potential to stop a criminal rioter dead in his tracks. In time, the term grew to mystic proportions and riot guns came to be regarded as infallible instruments of the policemen's will to control the unruly. Fortunately, in the early years of the century, the riot was an uncommon occurrence. In all honesty, the riot gun is usually nothing more than a shortened sporting shotgun, usually loaded with the ubiquitous 00 buck.

There's nothing mystical about the gun or its ammunition, but the reputation of the system continues unabated. It is a special purpose police tool that now most commonly rides in an upright rack in the front seat of most police patrol cars in America. There remains a certain degree of fear of the riot gun, a fear that can work to the advantage of the police officer who might have to use the gun against armed criminals and not against rioters. He's not likely to be heard calling his 870 Remington a riot gun; he just terms it a shotgun.

The fear of the shotgun can be useful. More than one policeman has stopped a fleeing criminal in his tracks when he worked the action slide — "racked" a shotgun. Sometimes this happens even when the crook is well out of shotgun range. Facts and fantasy notwithstanding, the shotgun is a viable tool for modern law enforcement use.

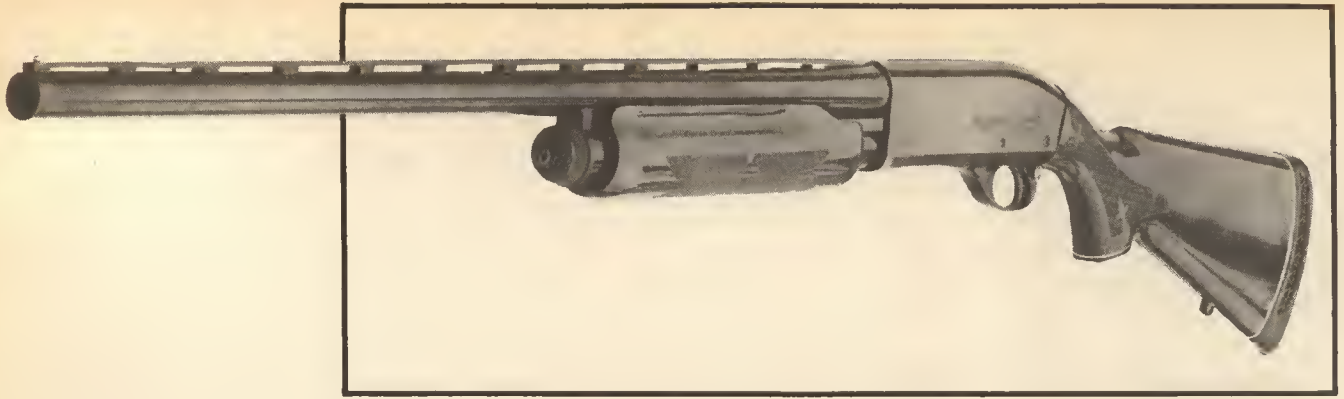
Shotguns for use against human targets have a long history. But it is in relatively recent times that we have come to see particular types of shotguns as people guns. On the American frontier, the shotgun in use was a shortened side-by-side double. Sometimes it was a 12 gauge, but often a 10. With the ammo loaded in those days, the drastically shortened barrel produced a somewhat greater spread than we currently realize. Even then and certainly now, the best reason for shortening the barrel was to make the gun easier to handle and not for any real or imagined ballistic improvement.

*It wasn't built for use in riots, but this fine old Model 97 Winchester trench gun would serve well in that role. Most of the time, the shotgun in modern police service is used to augment the firepower of the patrol officer.*



*Most police shotguns are really nothing more than plain versions of the various manufacturer's sporting shotguns modified with shorter barrels and plain finishes. On this aging Ithaca, the sporting motif remains on the receiver.*





*Sporting shotguns will no doubt receive more use but a lot better care than a police shotgun. Sporters, such as this 870 Remington, are fired in annual hunting forays and on the trap and skeet field. They're one-man guns.*

When repeating shotguns came into vogue in the latter part of the Nineteenth Century, they were naturals to be cut back to handling length and used for various guard and law enforcement purposes. Turn-of-the-century catalogs from Winchester show various of the company's repeaters factory-shortened to twenty inches. As often as not they were called guard guns.

The first widespread use of the shotgun as a combat weapon was when Winchester made thousands of their Models 97 and 12 pumpguns for use by the American Expeditionary Force in the trenches of World War I. These guns were fitted out with sturdy, sheet metal barrel jackets and bayonet lugs. The jacket was there to protect the firer's hands from the heated barrel, but the combination of the sinister-looking perforated jacket and lengthy bayonet gave these guns a look that is menacing in the extreme. In the sloppy trench fighting of World War I France, the trench guns proved themselves worthy items of issue.

*But the police shotguns, like this elderly 97 Winchester, are carried in the shotgun rack in the front seat of the patrol car. They aren't often fired, but they get a great deal of abuse. They're used by many different officers.*

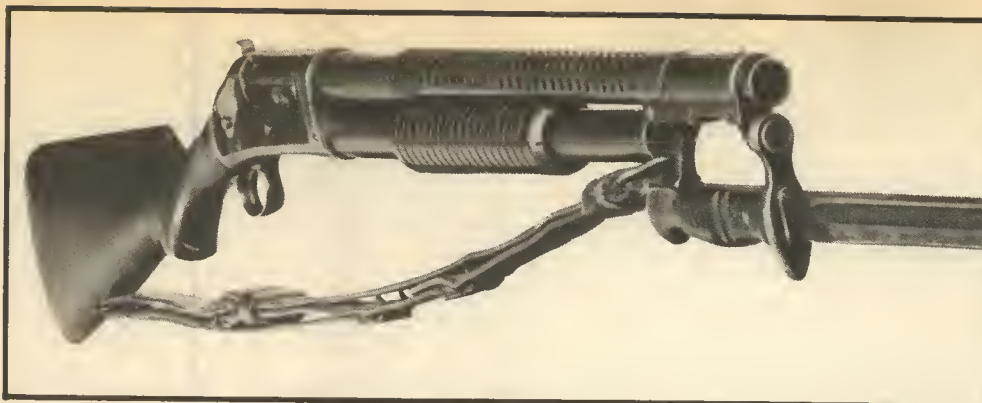
The important result of the use of the shotguns as fighting tools in World War I was to somewhat legitimize the guns in the public awareness. While the guns also were used to some extent in World War II, Korea and Vietnam, it was World War I that put the short shotgun on the map. In police use, the shotgun was a weapon that was kept in the station weapons locker until the need came for it, as in a real riot. The guns then were brought out and put to use.

In relatively modern times — since the mid-Sixties — the shotgun has been seen a lot more often. Police agencies have bigger budgets than they used to, the price of the police shotguns is not particularly high and the guns are now in locked racks in the front seat of most police cruisers in this country. This is all to the good. Most of the instances where police officers are involved in shootings would be best resolved if the weapon used were a shotgun.

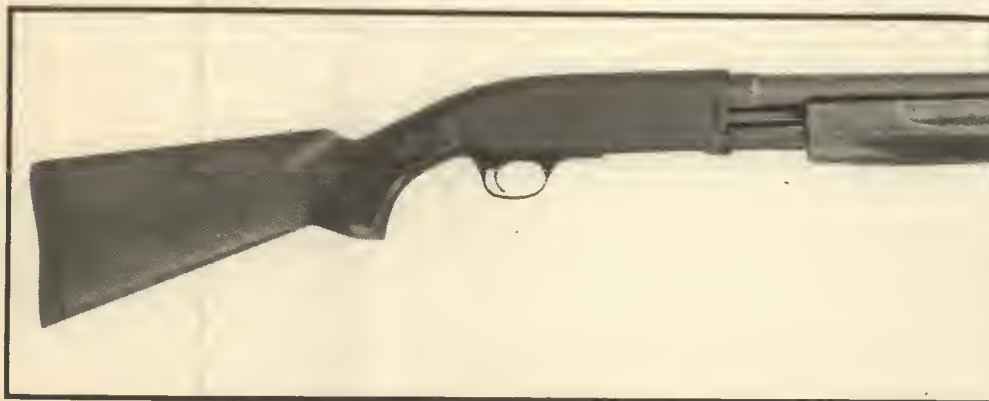
The problem is that all too often there's no warning and the fight is thrust upon an officer when he's armed with the sidearm alone. Whenever there is some warning that a







*Despite the military character of this particular shotgun, you have to consider the sporting origins that lend such emphasis to field reliability. It's an old design, the first successful pump repeater, and made for heavy field use. It's doubtful if the bayonet was used on police models.*



*This is one of the newest police shotguns on the market. Browning's BPS was originally a sporter, built for the same extended service as the Winchester at the top of the page. The high shine is gone from the police gun.*

shooting might occur, the policeman is well advised to break out the shotgun. There are two excellent reasons for this.

One reason is the reputation of the shotgun. The appearance of the gun on the scene of conflict often will calm things down. All current shotguns have a down-to-earth, businesslike look that most people simply don't want to tangle with.

If the appearance of a shotgun were a guarantee that the bad guys would always raise their hands in immediate surrender, we wouldn't have to bother to load them. It doesn't work quite that way, so we need to look at what a shotgun will actually do, the second of our two reasons for popping it out of the rack.

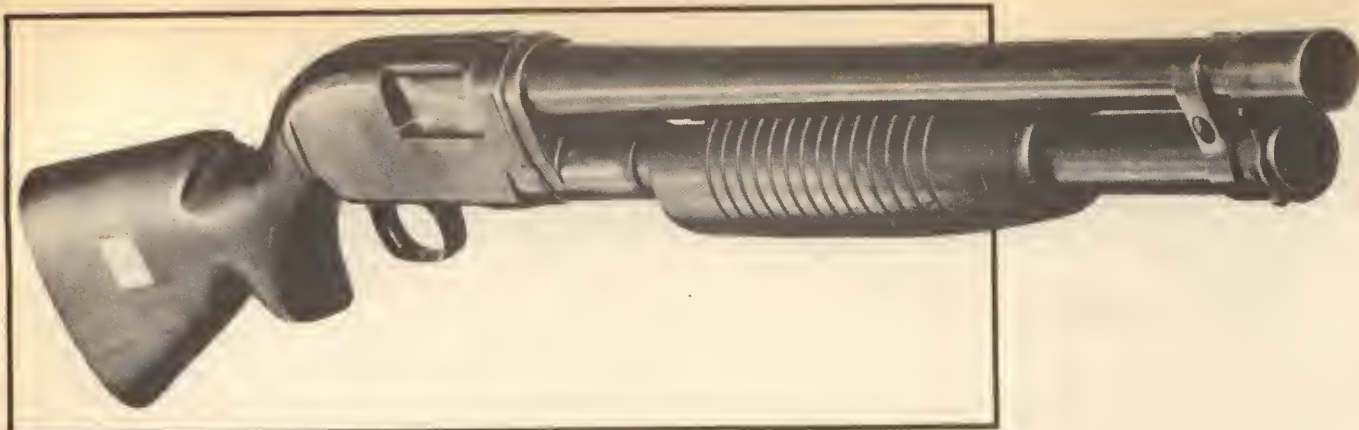
For starters, a shotgun won't do what the movies and TV shows would have us believe. But within the normal range limitations of the shotgun, it usually will do more than the handgun will. Out to possibly as much as thirty yards, the shotgun will put more lead in the air at about the same

velocity for each pull of the trigger as any handgun ever made. Properly used, the shotgun is devastating to personnel. It often will do enough damage to the structure of doors, automobile bodies and the like, that a fast second shot will be all that is needed to resolve the fight.

It's logical to mention at this point that it's possible to miss a man-sized target completely. This happens often and it goes without saying that all the devastating power in the world serves no purpose whatsoever if it isn't delivered to the target.

Most of the time, the shotgun in use is a version of one manufacturer or another's sporting pump shotgun. The pump shotgun usually is chosen because it has a respectable magazine capacity, is priced modestly and becomes pretty compact when shortened. Further, the pump shotgun as developed and produced in this country is a rugged and reliable firearm with a simple operating drill. It's a fairly easy weapon to teach people to handle.

Federal law states that shotguns in civilian hands can be



*This Model 12 Winchester looks pretty normal, but a close examination will reveal modifications to make the gun usable in a patrol car: shortening of both butt and barrel. The tubing had to be brazed onto the muzzle to make the gun a legal length when it was sold as surplus.*

no shorter than twenty-six inches overall, with barrels no shorter than eighteen inches. Law enforcement agencies can be exempted from these provisions, but most often choose to fit their shotguns with either eighteen- or twenty-inch barrels. Increasingly, the trend is to the shorter lengths, since they are a little easier to handle and to get out of shotgun racks in the front seat area of today's smaller cars. Sometimes the need for a particularly short gun for a certain purpose will result in a shotgun shortened to as little as fourteen inches.

Every major manufacturer of sporting shotguns produces a police shotgun. Mossberg produces several distinctly different pumpguns. Remington offers the 870 in several versions and Winchester has a number of guns built on the company's well known 1300 action. Browning is the latest on the police shotgun scene, offering a matte-finished version of the popular BPS. Let's look at them individually.

In terms of pure variety of features, it would be hard to beat the Mossberg line. The company has produced the Model 500 pumpgun in several sporting versions for a number of years. It is a rugged and reliable shotgun with

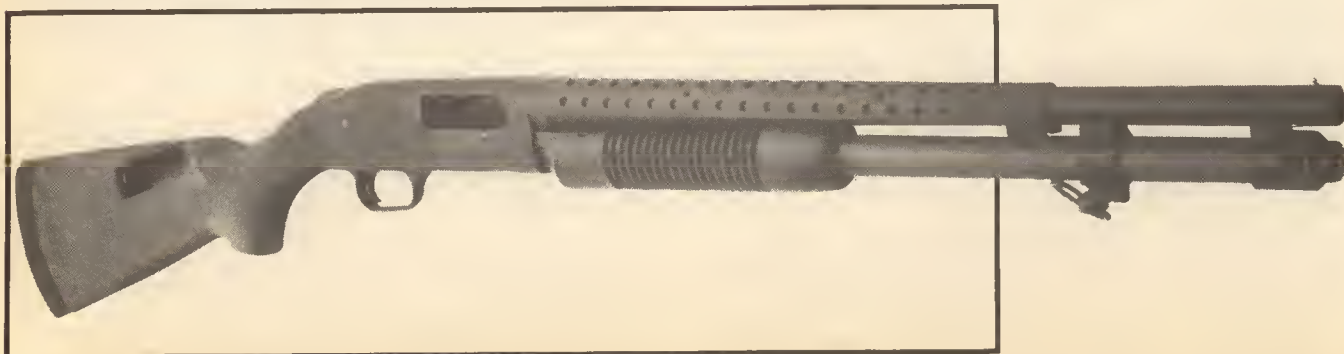
features that make it ideally suited for use as a police or military firearm.

The Mossberg 590 is the latest in the company's catalog. This shotgun is another version of the 500, fitted with a full-length magazine tube that holds nine rounds. The 590 is finished in a flat, dull-black matte. It also has a butt stock made of one of those indestructible plastic or glass combination materials. The grasping portion of the forend is made of the same stuff, similarly dulled to blend into the environment without glare.

The stock of the 590 merits attention for yet another reason. It is a Speed-Feed stock as developed by the Davis Company of Sacramento, California. This clever idea consists of a molded butt stock of more or less typical dimensions and contours. The stock differs in the sense that it has a pair of magazine tubes cast into the sides, high on the right side and low on the left. The tubes will each hold a pair of shotgun shells and each is fitted with an internal follower and spring. Shotgun shells are retained in place against the spring pressure by an internal shoulder at the mouth of each tube.

In use a pair of shells are slipped into the tube. When

*Mossberg 590. Among other credits, the new gun from the old-line firm meets the specifications drawn up by the U.S. Government. It is a sturdy and reliable firearm that likely will see future use by cops as well as GIs.*



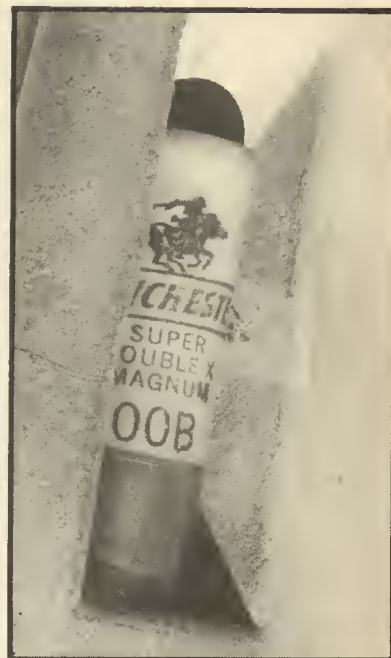


*The Mossberg 590 comes standard from the factory with a Speed-Feed stock. In these two views of the gun, the magazine tubes are clearly displayed. When the gun is in use, a pair of shells will fit into the tubes on each side of the stock. Each one of those tubes has a spring-loaded follower. It's a fairly easy matter for the officer to flick a shell out of the tube and into the palm of his hand. The total capacity of the gun is thirteen shots.*



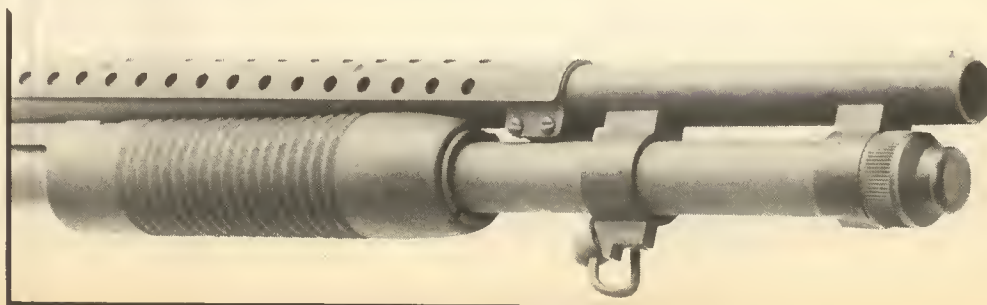
reloading the gun is necessary, the shooter has only to flick a shell out of the tube with an outward tug of the fingertip. The compressed magazine spring expands and puts the shell in the palm of the hand where it is then easy for one to transfer it to the breech of the gun. With a small amount of practice, the transfer of shells from storage in the buttstock to loading into the gun is remarkably smooth and easy. In the case of the 590, a Speed-Feed stock adds four more shells to the nine in the gun itself. This results in a shotgun that holds, all together in a single unit, thirteen rounds of buckshot.

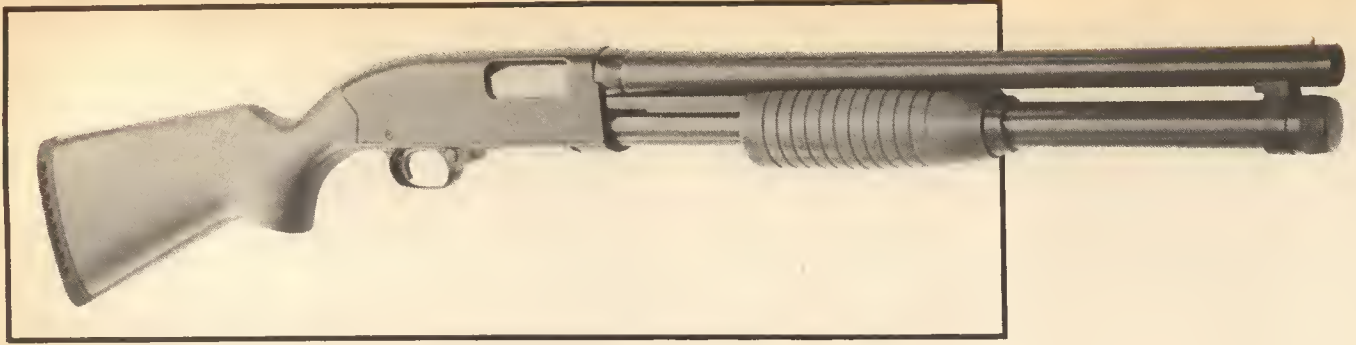
While the Mossberg 590 is unquestionably a plain pump shotgun of sporting origins, it has features that raise it to a high level of combat shotgun development. Along with the capacity for lots of available shots and the military-type finish, there's a ventilated handguard over the barrel which protects the shooter's hands from the heat produced in rapid fire.



*Close-up. The tube in the molded stock retains a 00 buck shell as shown here. The forward edge of the shell is tucked against the ledge in the tube mouth and the follower and spring hold it there.*

*Intended for heavy military use, the 590 has some old but valuable features. The perforated barrel jacket is there to keep the shooter's hands from being burned as well as to protect the relatively thin barrel from dings.*





*From U.S. Repeating Arms, we have a revamped Model 1300 Winchester shotgun called the Defender. In handling the gun, a shooter is immediately attracted by the smooth action. Winchester makes other cop shotguns.*

The gun has an exceptionally rugged action which uses twin action bars on the pump system. Finally, the 590 has a safety where it belongs: on the top rear of the receiver where the thumb of the shooting hand can push it forward to the "fire" position.

There is one final commentary in order on the 590. The U.S. military forces use large numbers of shotguns. For years these have been purchased from all of the manufacturers on an as-needed basis. In recent times, the Armed Forces wrote a military specification for what they felt was needed in a shotgun. The 590 Mossberg was the gun that was chosen. This is an endorsement of no small importance.

But the other makers also produce some excellent designs. Winchester has a number of worthwhile options available on the basic Model 1300 shotgun. There's a choice of barrel lengths and sights, as well as a pistol grip, a replacement unit that bolts on to the rear of the receiver. There may be some small need for a shotgun abbreviated in this fashion, particularly in SWAT or raid applications.

Possibly the best of the features available in the Winchester line, as produced by U.S. Repeating Arms, is a

chrome-plated and stainless steel gun. All metal surfaces of the gun are either polished stainless steel or heavily chrome plated. The result is a shotgun which is much more resistant to the ravages of weather and salt spray than any other shotgun. For marine police units or any police agency having a salt-air or humidity corrosion problem, the stainless-finished Winchester makes a lot of sense.

The basic Winchester Defender is a sturdy and reliable shotgun, to say the least. Here's an eight-shot gun that has to be handled to be believed. Of all of the shotguns evaluated in the course of writing this chapter, this Winchester has an action that is by far the smoothest. And a smooth action has great tactical value; there is much less chance of short-stroking a smooth-functioning gun.

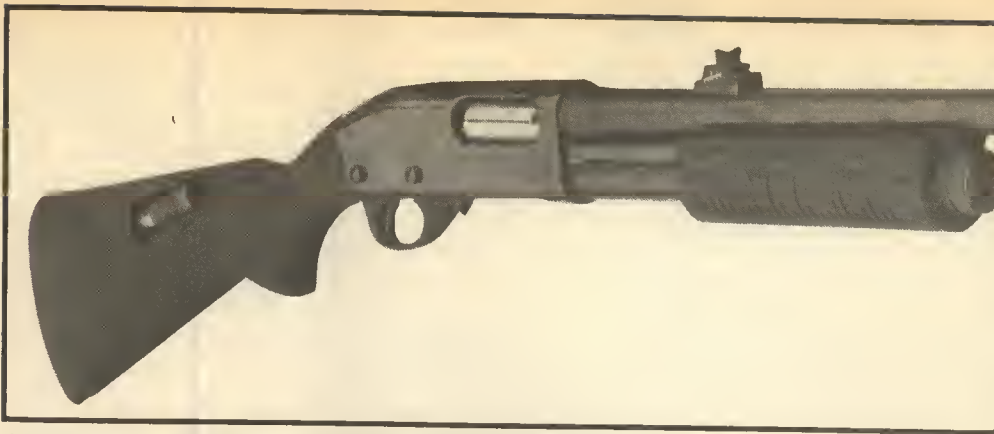
The 870 Remingtons have been in the lineup of police weaponry since the immediate post-war era. As such, the reliable Remington is the most persistently durable and universally used shotgun on the market. The currently produced Remington pumpgun does not differ materially from the guns that were made thirty-five years ago. They are still the standard by which all other shotguns are commonly measured.

*The Defender's magazine tube runs clear to the muzzle of a twenty-inch barrel, making the gun an eight-shooter. Like most other cop shotguns, this one has a BIG bead front sight.*

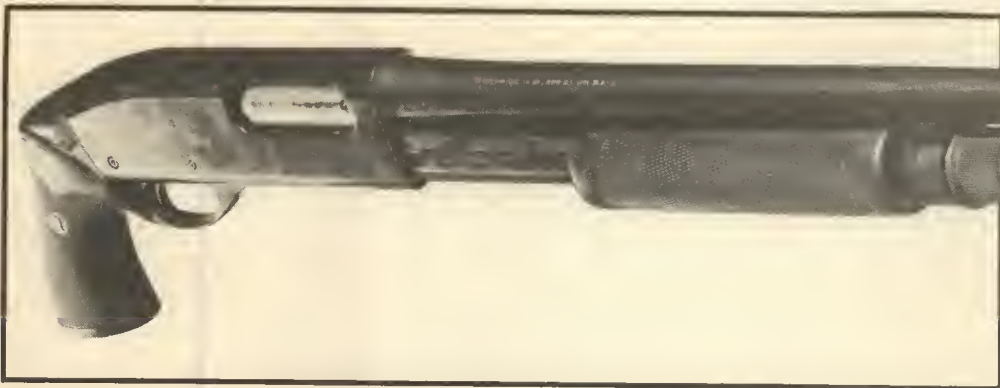


*The Winchester Defender mounts a cross-bolt safety in a boss on the front of the trigger guard. The button is larger than average and that makes it far easier to find in a hurry.*





*America's favorite shotgun, the 870 Remington, is seen on this page in several versions. This particular 870 has been fitted with a Speed-Feed stock and a slug barrel with adjustable rifle-type sights, handy in some cases.*

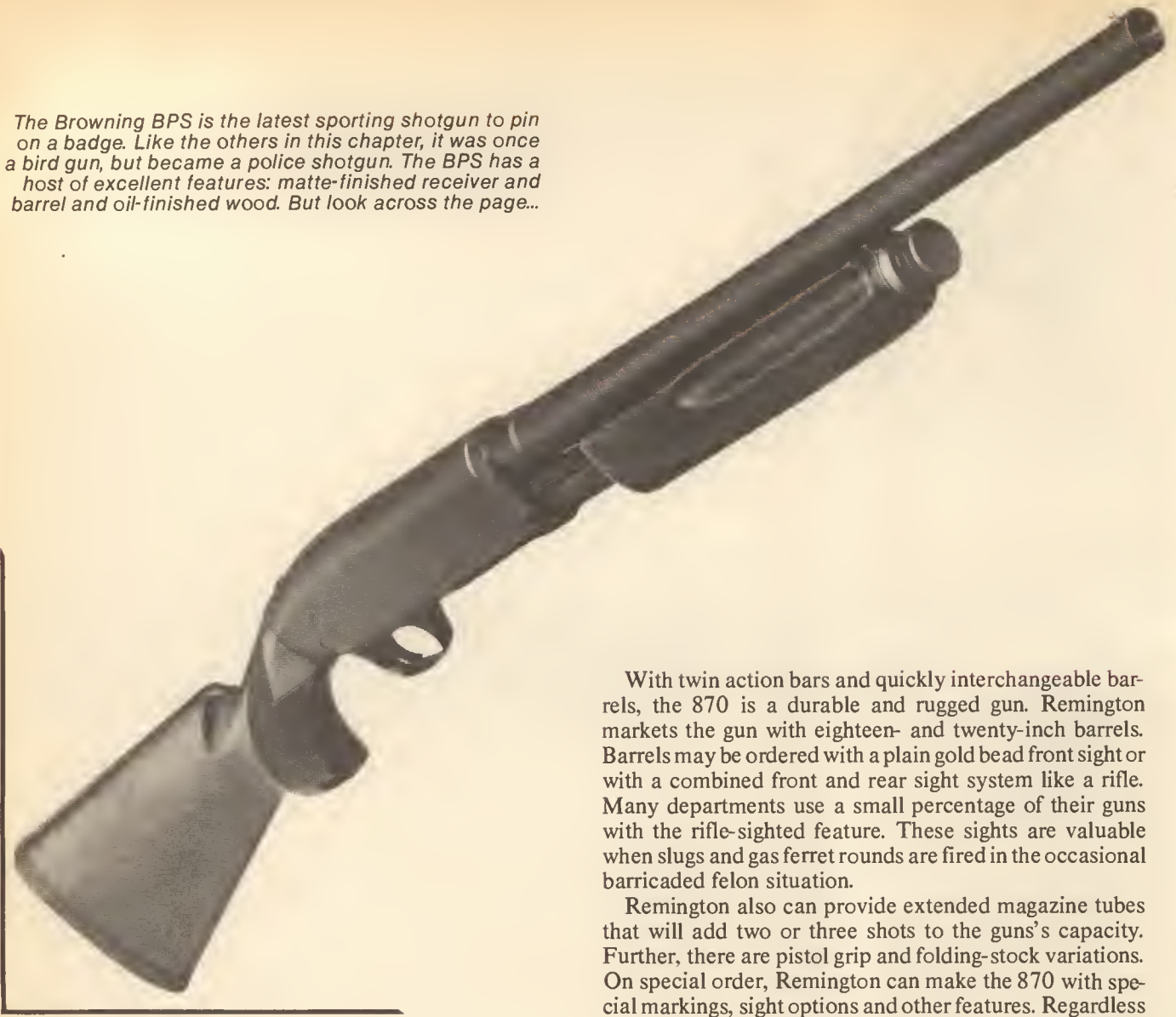


*And this 870 got a Choate magazine extension and the Vindicator kit from Pachmayr. There's often a need for a super-short shotgun and if you take off the butt, it must be replaced with the neoprene rubber unit shown.*

*Another handy accessory for the 870 is this clever little device that replaces the standard forend. From Laser Products, it is a small but powerful flashlight that will let a cop see and shoot to as much as twenty-five yards.*



*The Browning BPS is the latest sporting shotgun to pin on a badge. Like the others in this chapter, it was once a bird gun, but became a police shotgun. The BPS has a host of excellent features: matte-finished receiver and barrel and oil-finished wood. But look across the page...*

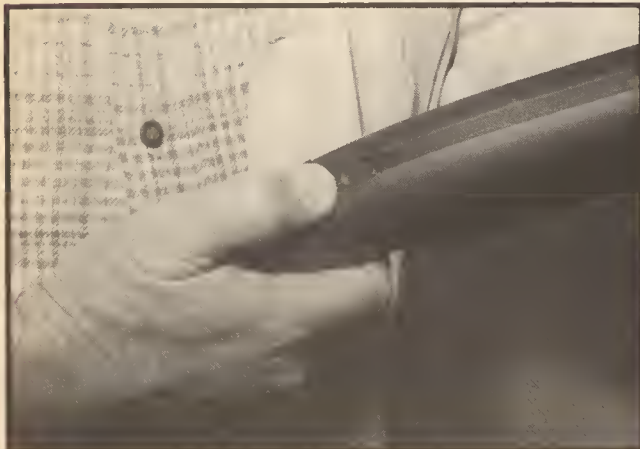


With twin action bars and quickly interchangeable barrels, the 870 is a durable and rugged gun. Remington markets the gun with eighteen- and twenty-inch barrels. Barrels may be ordered with a plain gold bead front sight or with a combined front and rear sight system like a rifle. Many departments use a small percentage of their guns with the rifle-sighted feature. These sights are valuable when slugs and gas ferret rounds are fired in the occasional barricaded felon situation.

Remington also can provide extended magazine tubes that will add two or three shots to the gun's capacity. Further, there are pistol grip and folding-stock variations. On special order, Remington can make the 870 with special markings, sight options and other features. Regardless of which features are used on a particular 870, the man who takes it out of the rack carries the most durable and combat-proven shotgun ever made.

If there is a shotgun that might improve on the enviable reputation of the 870, it is the relatively new Browning BPS. As a sporting shotgun, the BPS (Browning Pump Shotgun) has been around for several years; as a police gun, it is relatively new. The BPS combines the best features of many excellent pump shotguns.

Like the Ithaca Model 37 and Remington Model 17, both now missing from the shotgun scene, the BPS ejects shells downwards. This is a worthwhile feature for police use where it is often necessary to fire the gun around corners and from positions that are awkward in the extreme. If



*The safety on the BPS slides forward to fire. It's usable by either right- or left-handed shooters and that means ease of teaching as well as in tactical use. See text for a discussion of the operational value of this concept.*





*...to see the best feature of the gun. It is almost truly ambidextrous as the right and left side views suggest. A shotgun that works equally well to either side has great tactical value. The late and lamented Ithaca was such a gun, but the safety system of the BPS makes it superior.*

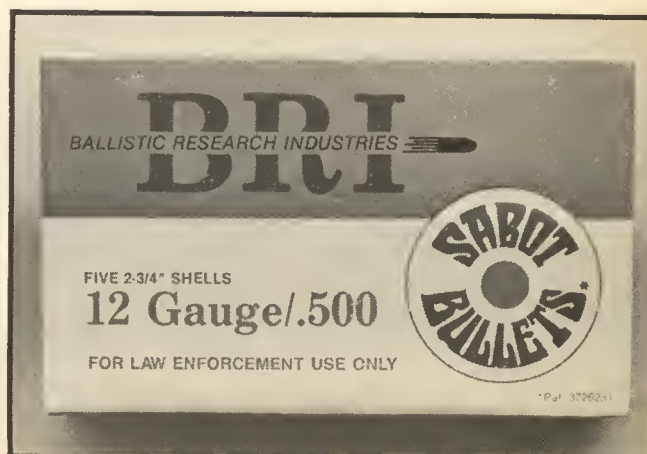
the fired shells are ejected down, they can't jam against a restricted surface such as a door jamb.

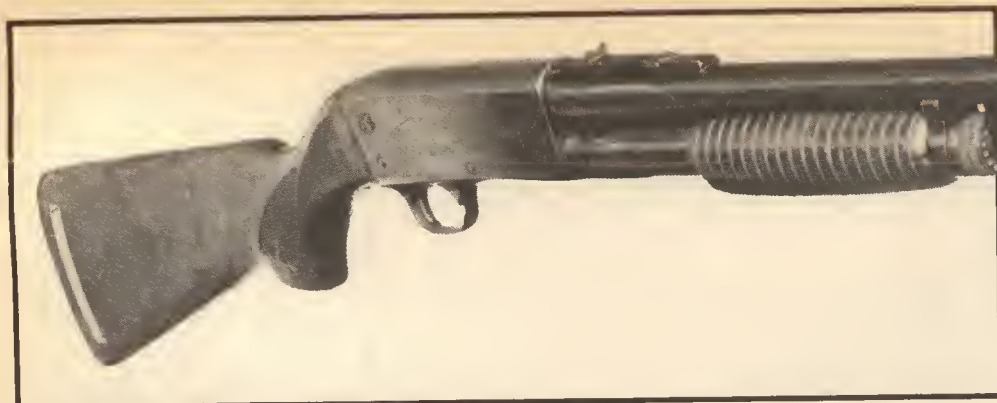
Like the excellent 500-series Mossberg, the Browning places the manual safety where it is convenient for use either right- or left-handed. Erroneously termed a "tang" safety, the BPS safety is mounted on the top rear edge of the receiver where it joins the butt stock. It's a sliding catch that's moved forward to the fire position and differs from the catch in most shotguns.

Nearly all other guns use a cross-bolt arrangement in the trigger guard area. It works quite well, but usually has a right-handed character. The advantage of a back-and-forth, rather than side-to-side, movement is that it is the same whether you are right- or left-handed. More significantly, it is the same regardless of which shoulder the tactical situation requires you to shoot from. When you consider that a police shotgun must be used by a wide variety of people, rather than a single officer, the safety becomes important.

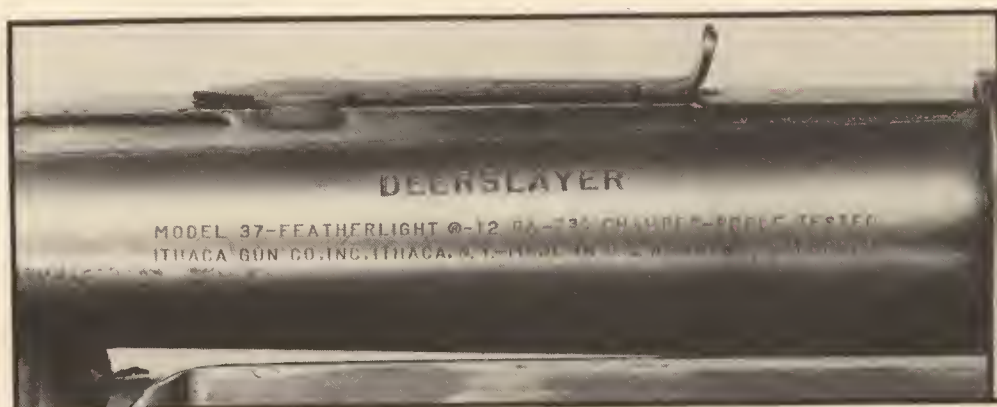
Like the Mossberg and Winchester guns, the BPS is chambered for three-inch shells. This adds up to greater ammunition versatility — anything 12 gauge will fit and fire in an emergency. But perhaps more significantly, the three-inch chamber allows the police agency a lot more latitude in the deliberate choice of anti-personnel ammunition. The hotter loadings of buckshot are superior in their increased hit probability as well as lethality. Slugs, preferably the superb BRI sabot rounds, are also an option.

*The BPS is chambered for three-inch shells and will use these more common shorter ones. The three-inch option is also found on the Mossberg and Winchester guns. Since a great many makers, including BRI, will soon offer slugs and other loadings in the longer size, it makes sense.*



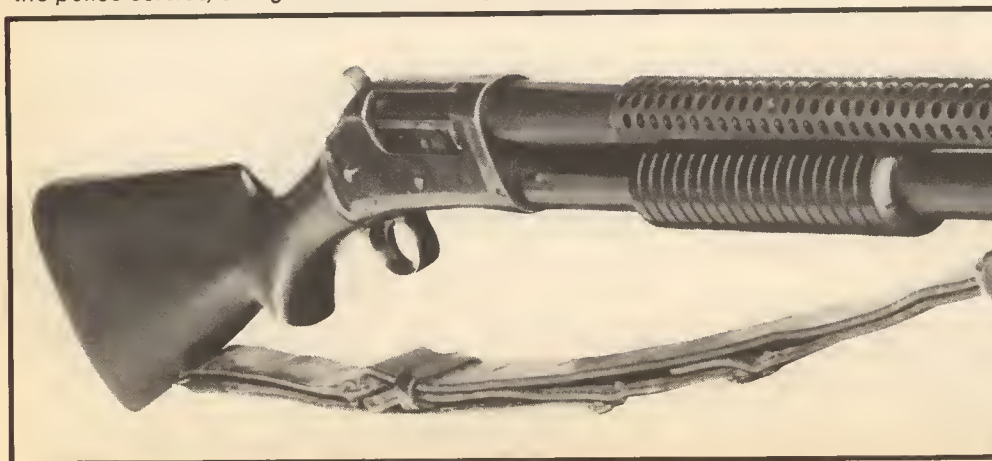


*The Ithaca Model 37 is one of America's best shotguns, but apparently no more of them will be made. They came in lots of versions, including some for special uses in the Vietnam war. Most police Ithacas were like this one.*

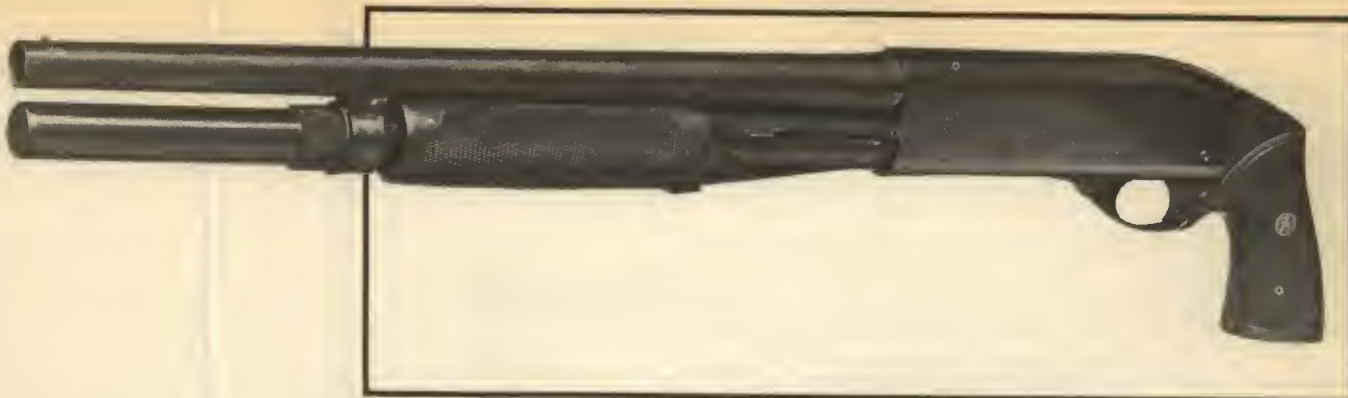


*Sporting heritage is most apparent in this photo of the Ithaca barrel markings. The Deerslayer was the label used to describe the basic slug gun. It was a natural for police use with the excellent sights and bottom ejection.*

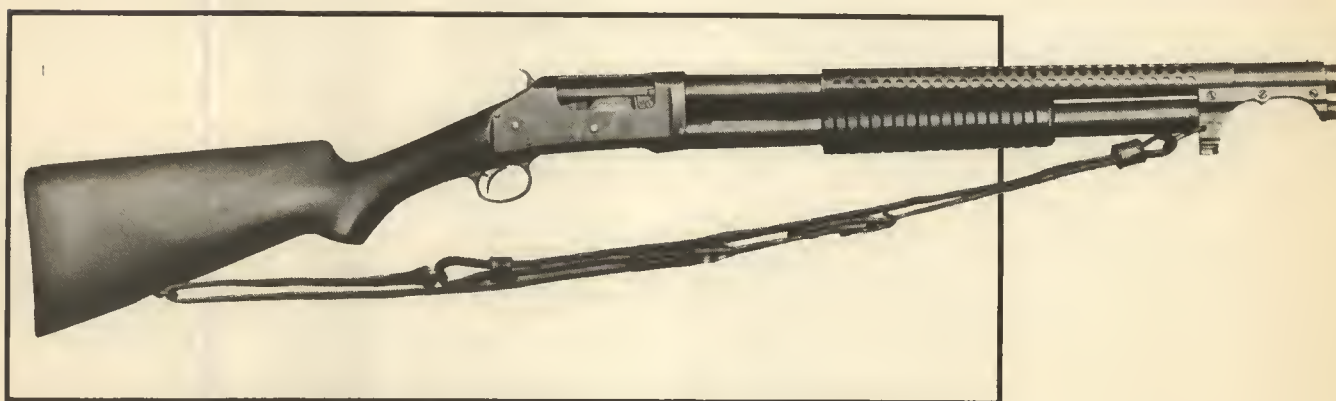
*Military needs inspired the sling, bayonet lug and jacket around the barrel. Military routine and discipline kept a fine old shotgun in working order for a half-century. In the police service, shotguns are used hard, even abused.*







*870s for the '80s. Several million of the popular 870s are in use around the world and a big percentage are police guns. With the possible exception of the Colt .45, there is no other firearm commanding such a wide range of after-market accessories. They make a good gun better.*



*And that brings us back to where we started. You won't find a lot of these in cars these days, but that doesn't mean that they aren't worthy of use. The Model 97 will be ninety years old this year, but still one of the best.*

Regardless of the ammo chosen the gun needs to be maintained in good working condition by the department armorer or local gunsmith. Lots of fine old shotguns — Winchester 97s and 12s, Remington 31s, Savage and Stevens guns of several varieties. Browning Auto-5s and the late and much-lamented Ithaca Police Specials — stayed in active service for years because they were well cared for. Conversely, a good new shotgun can be destroyed in a hurry if it is abused or neglected. Since the police shotgun is not commonly assigned to a single officer, the gun doesn't usually get the attention reserved for an individual sidearm.

There are accessories on the market that materially increase the versatility of the police shotgun. Various stocks

are available and some of the best are the ones made by Garth Choate of Bald Knob, Arkansas, can be fitted to nearly all of today's police shotguns. The only ones that can't be readily modified in this way are the ones made with an extended tube and certain of the autoloaders. If a few inches tubing at the front end of a shotgun can add a few more shots, so much the better. The extended tube must be exceptionally sturdy before it can be considered usable in the rough-and-tumble atmosphere of police service.

In a similar fashion, the extended magazines made by Garth Choate of Bald Knob, Arkansas, can be fitted to nearly all of today's police shotguns. The only ones that can't be readily modified in this way are the ones made with an extended tube and certain of the autoloaders. If a few inches tubing at the front end of a shotgun can add a few more shots, so much the better. The extended tube must be exceptionally sturdy before it can be considered usable in the rough-and-tumble atmosphere of police service.

For the working patrolman, a police shotgun is often his trump card in the high-stakes game of keeping the peace. Fully understood, carefully maintained and skillfully used, the shotgun is one of the best of police tools.

And there's even the chance that a riot might come along some day.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

*All The Fancy Handguns  
And Ferocious Hollow Points  
Be Damned, Everyone Knows.....*



*The Mossberg Bullpup shotgun is new, but the buckshot is as old as shotgun shells. The most common load is the nine-pellet #00. One shot at ten yards spreads as shown.*

**C**ERTAIN THINGS just aren't questioned. One of them is that there's nothing better in the way of shotgun fodder for police work than plain old #00 buckshot. There's not the slightest doubt that the ammunition makers sell tens of thousands of rounds of shotgun shells to police agencies every year. The majority of them contain nine pellets of #00 buckshot.

The #00 pellets are approximately .33-inch in diameter. To say "approximately" is correct, since there are small differences in pellets from one maker to another and

even from one batch of ammo to the next. Depending on the shotgun in which they are fired, those nine pellets leave the muzzle at about 1300 feet per second. Barrel length and amount of choke, if any, will have an effect, but the pattern will spread rather predictably out to about twenty to twenty-five yards. At that range — and certainly at any lesser distance — the man who stands in the way of such a charge will likely have his day ruined.

Or will he? People who have used shotguns in combat situations will quickly tell you that, if the range stands close to that twenty-five yard-point, a man may well make



# BUCKSHOT IS BAD NEWS!

it through the pattern with wounds, but not necessarily wounds that will put him down. And if you add the imponderables to the equation, such things as the chemical state of the subject's body and the marksmanship difficulties involved, he might not be particularly troubled by the experience. Shotgun marksmanship is the skill necessary to center a pattern on a moving man-sized target. It isn't a factor that we will take up here, nor is the effect of drugs or other chemicals in a person's system.

Instead, let's look at the results of some informal shooting experiments that we performed to see if the classic load of #00 is really the best choice for anti-personnel use in law enforcement. There are three sizes of buckshot which have been used in law enforcement and two more that might merit consideration.

The first and by far most common size is #00, but some police departments have experimented with #4 buck, usually after a suspect was not stopped by a charge of #00. #4 is the smallest size of buckshot commercially available, the pellets, .24-inch in diameter. On the far side of #00, there is a slightly larger pellet called #000 with a diameter of .36-inch, about the same diameter as a typical revolver bullet.

Used mostly by hunters, the two less common sizes are #0, at a diameter of .32-inch and #1 measuring .30-inch. The five sizes run the gamut from the largest at .36-inch to the smallest at .24. Logically, there are more pellets in a shell loaded with the smallest size of buckshot. In standard 2¾-inch loadings the pellet count is as follows: #000-(8); #00-(9); #0-(12); #1-(16) and #4-(27).

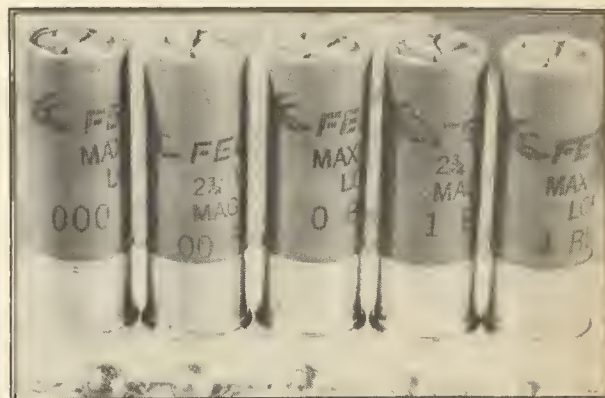
The shotgun ammo picture enlarges somewhat more when you consider that there are two other types of 12-

gauge shells manufactured: the 2¾-inch magnum and the three-inch magnum. The 2¾-inch magnum shell, which we'll call the short magnum, is perfectly suitable for use in any modern shotgun made with the standard chamber. This type of shell is internally different in order to allow for a larger payload of shot. The three-inchers are a different ballgame. They require a shotgun built with a longer chamber. In the recent past, this type of gun was not common in police armories, but the current guns from Winchester, Mossberg and Browning all use the feature.

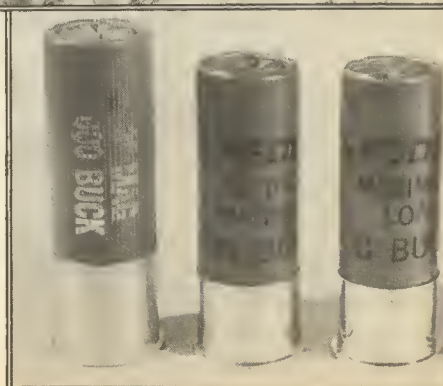
Look at the following chart. Here we have the total buckshot ammunition picture tabulated for you:

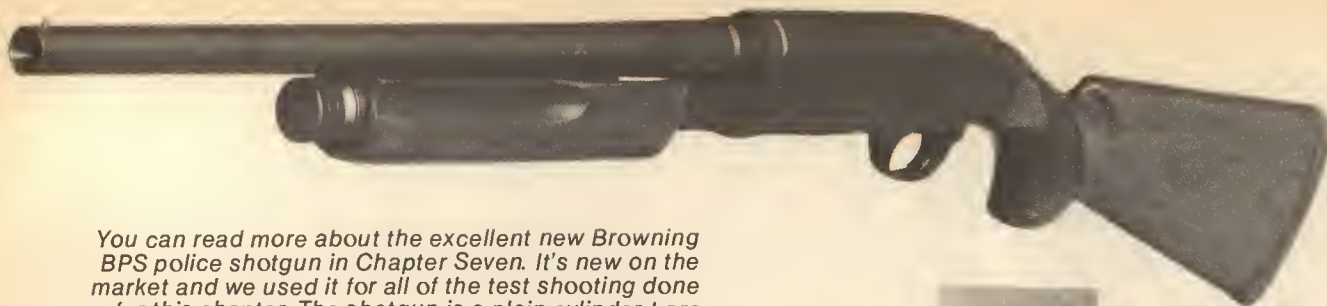
**BUCKSHOT SPECIFICATIONS**

TYPE	DIAMETER	Pellet Count per Shell		
		STANDARD	2¾" MAG	3" MAG
#000	.36 inch	8		10
#00	.33 inch	9	12	15
#0	.32 inch	12		
#1	.30 inch	16	20	24
#4	.24 inch	27	34	41

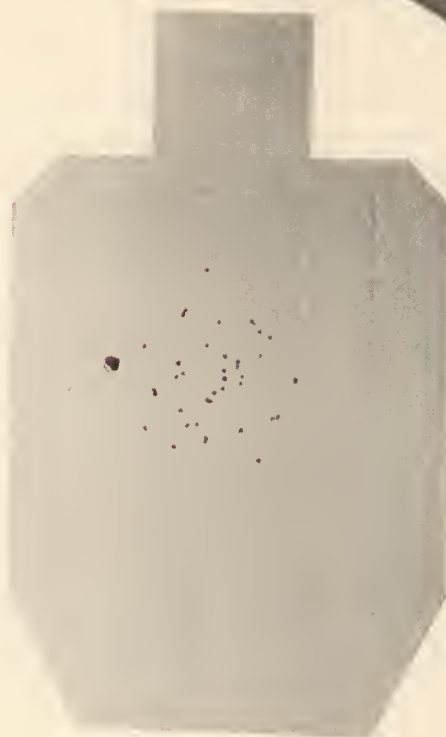


*Right: The five sizes of buckshot are as seen here and as listed in the table. Below: The shells themselves, all lined up for inspection. Below right: #000, #00 and #0 are all pellets large enough to penetrate and strike a human target with authority. But #4s persist as well.*





*You can read more about the excellent new Browning BPS police shotgun in Chapter Seven. It's new on the market and we used it for all of the test shooting done for this chapter. The shotgun is a plain cylinder-bore gun with a single bead front sight. The target displays the effect of a single shot of #4 buckshot at ten yards. Compare it to the target on page 130, fired from the same distance. At close range, anything will get it done.*



There's quite a range of buckshot performance covered in this chart. At the opposite ends, you could have eight #000 or forty-one #4s and the selection in either direction reflects the poles in philosophy. The heavier pellet will hit harder at any range. Further, they will retain their inherent kinetic energy out to greater distances. Many shooters will argue for the heaviest possible pellet and use #000 to put 'em down quick.

This makes sense. Until you consider that shotgun patterns in combat situations don't always end up perfectly centered on a target. When the battle is taking place around cars or other interfering objects, part of the pattern may be masked. Even in the open there's also the problem of marksmanship — making sure that it's the center of the pattern that strikes the target and not the edge. With these complexities added to the equation, other shooters will opt for more pellets in the load, albeit smaller ones, to be sure the target is hit with *something*.

It is not a readily resolved issue. And, while we did not have the facilities to test for tissue penetration and energy transfer, it's obvious from the experience of buck-shooting hunters that smaller sized pellets lose their *oomph* in extended-range shooting.

So what to do? When there wasn't so much variety in buckshot on the market and partially because of the military use of the stuff, we long ago compromised on #00.

In order to determine how the old reliable load actually performs, we tried shooting it at a variety of ranges. The targets are the new standard IPSC type produced by T-M Industries of Santa Monica, California. With a torso dimension of about twenty-five-by-nineteen inches and a head of six-by-seven these targets are a reasonable reflection of human body size. They are a neutral tan in color.

All of the test shooting reported in this chapter was done by contributing author Joe Boyd, who was on a day off from his normal duties of schooling rookie cops in gun handling. The gun used was a new Browning BPS police shotgun. The ammunition was made by all of the three major ammo suppliers to the police market: Federal, Remington or Winchester.

We already have mentioned several times that the #00 standard load isn't all that it's cracked up to be at ranges beyond twenty-five yards. We were able to determine this

with a few rounds of shooting. Boyd fired four rounds from the BPS at a target at ranges of 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 yards. Four rounds is the magazine capacity of most police shotguns and certainly the largest number of rounds you are ever likely to fire at a single target. If you need more than four on a single subject, you have a tactical problem of serious proportions.

Boyd determined exactly where the shotgun was hitting on the target and aimed center of mass. In other words, he did not attempt to aim at different spots in order to disperse the pattern. We know that there are nine #00 pellets per shell, so there should be thirty-six hits on the target if all four shots place all of their pellets on the target.

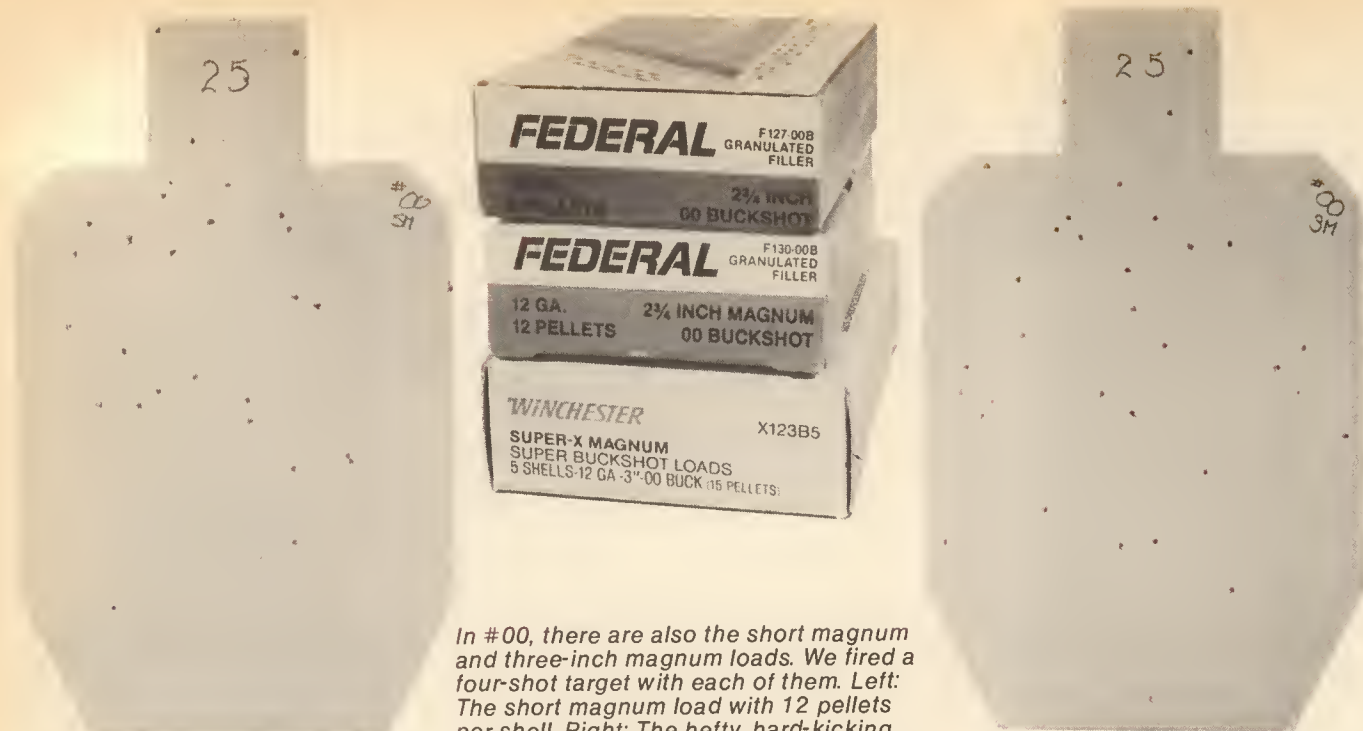
That's just what happened at ten yards, then at fifteen. There were thirty-six holes at twenty yards, but when the range reached twenty-five yards, the hit count dropped to twenty-two. Twenty-two out of thirty-six pellets means that about thirty-nine percent of Boyd's pellets missed. At thirty yards, the hit count was twenty-one, forty-two percent missing. Looking at the ragged and irregular dispersion of hits on the latter two targets, it's pretty clear that some of the hits would be in marginal areas and that the vitals might not have been penetrated.

This does pretty well establish that #00 buckshot can't





*This series of five targets tells an interesting story. The range at which each was fired is seen in the head area. Each of them was hit with four rounds of the popular nine-pellet load of #00 buckshot. If all pellets hit the target, there should be 36 hits on each. But there aren't that many beyond twenty yards. #00 may not be the best choice for police work, as discussed in test.*



*In #00, there are also the short magnum and three-inch magnum loads. We fired a four-shot target with each of them. Left: The short magnum load with 12 pellets per shell. Right: The hefty, hard-kicking three-inch #00 load, with fifteen pellets per shell. Surprisingly, the three-incher missed with a full fifty percent of pellets.*



*And then there is #000, largest size of buckshot commercially available. Left: The eight-pellet standard load, four shots at the 25 yard line. Right: Three-inch #000 shells are the biggest and possibly most effective shotgun ammo available for police work. If there is a drawback, it would have to be the undesirable kick which troubles some shooters a bit. Then it's a training problem.*

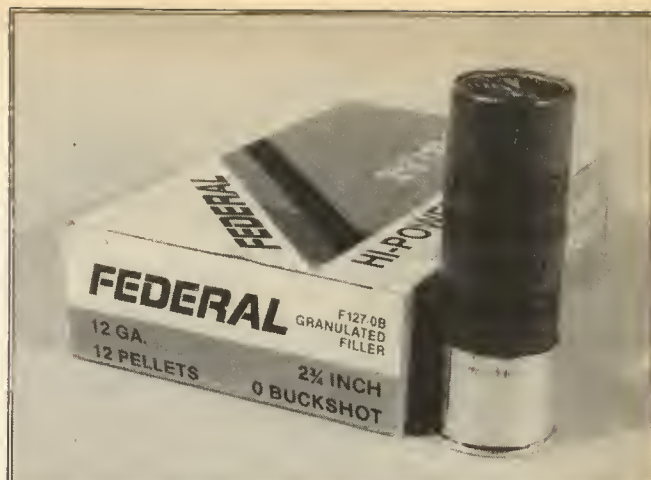


be relied upon to hit with all pellets at anything beyond twenty yards. As a practical matter, the typical police shotgun with no choke in the bore, firing standard #00 shells, is a twenty-five yard gun at best.

Since we didn't want to completely condemn the grand old buckshot without a fair trial, we tried two more loadings of #00. Once more at twenty-five yards, we fired four rounds of short magnum #00, using twelve pellets per load and a total of forty-eight in all. Then we fired the hefty three-inch magnum load with fifteen per shell, sixty pellets total. The short magnum produced thirty hits with forty-eight pellets, losing about thirty-seven percent to complete misses. The three-inch magnum, with a hefty recoil that might be objectionable to some smaller-statured officers, also produced thirty hits. But that's thirty out of sixty, which means that the shell wastes half its pellets on the average.

Now let's see what happens when we use fewer but larger pellets per shell. At the same twenty-five yards, we touched off four rounds of #000 buckshot in the standard loading of eight pellets per shell, thirty-two pellets total. Twenty-five .36-inch holes were in the target when we retrieved it. That means that seven pellets missed the man-sized silhouette, less than twenty-two percent misses. The three-inch magnum loading of #000 was also pretty decent. Of the forty pellets present when Joe Boyd started shooting, thirty made it to and through the target. Twenty-five percent missed.

You can go the other way in shot sizes. The #0 is available in only the one standard load with twelve pellets per



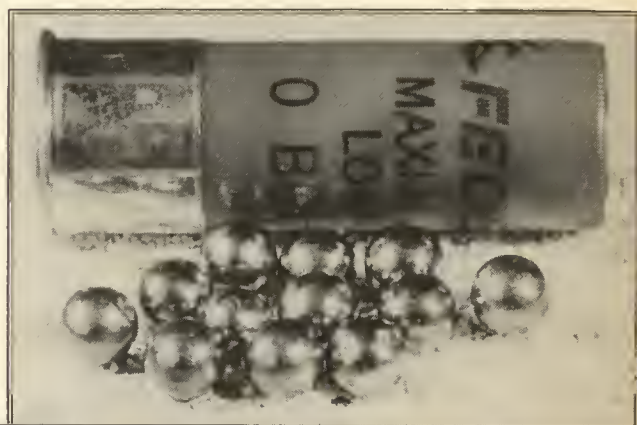
*Often overlooked, #0 buckshot may have some value in the police ammo picture. The difference in pellet size between #00 and #0 is a scant .01-inch. The criminal hit with either is not likely to be able to report any real difference. There is only this one load of #0 made.*

shell, forty-eight of them in four shells. We tried that and found twenty-five hits. That's forty-eight percent misses.

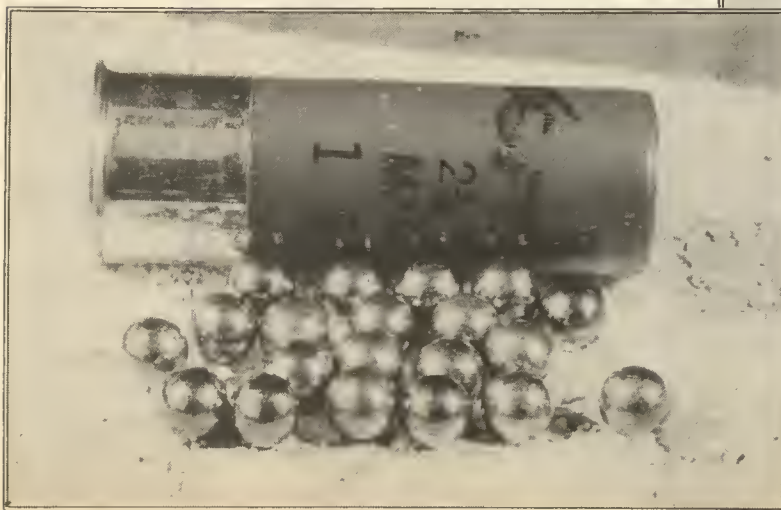
Farther down the scale, there's #1 buckshot at .30-inch diameter. Sixteen pellets per shell multiplies out to sixty-four pellets in four shells. Forty-three of them made it to the target for a miss factor of about thirty-two percent.

That leaves the .24-inch #4 buckshot, available in all

*Right: A #0 buckshot shell dissected has the twelve pellets cradled in a spoonful of grated polyethylene filler. This stuff is used as a buffering agent in all of the buckshot loads to check pellet deformation.*



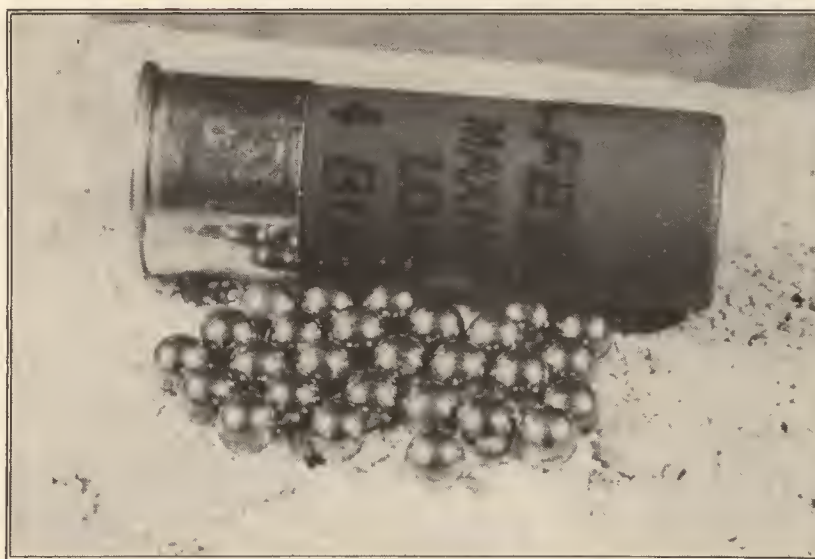
*Left: The least likely buckshot size found in police service is #1. This is the short magnum load: Twenty pellets, each about thirty caliber. Again, the pellets are seen with the filler. This is not a common load.*



three loadings: standard, short magnum and three-inch. We tried all of them. The standard load has twenty-seven pellets; 108 total. We got sixty-four hits, missing forty-one percent. The short magnum has 136 pellets in four shells, thirty-four each. Ninety-two made it; miss percentage: thirty-two. And finally the three-inch magnum load has a whopping forty-one pellets in each shell, for 164 total. 108

hit the target, thirty-five percent missing.

That's a lot of shooting. But it serves to prove to my satisfaction that we are probably using the wrong load. I firmly believe that we'd be better off going to either of the two loadings of #000. For one thing, the hit with a #000 pellet is a harder hit as the heavier pellet will retain energy and penetrate better. And the larger pellets seem to be



*Above and left: In some agencies, this load is widely accepted as the best available. The standard load of #4 buckshot puts twenty-seven pellets in each shell. This dispersion on the silhouette target is quite even. This is the argument for using #4: You will get hits.*



*Above and right: There are more pellets in the air with this load than with any other. Three-inch #4s have forty-one pellets per shell and one hundred sixty-four in four shells. The pattern isn't bad, but fifty-six pellets missed the silhouette, wasted in thin air!*







*Above: The standard load of eight #000 pellets makes a fine all-around choice for many police agencies. This ammo will work in any modern police shotgun. Right: The long-range problem is handled with these. The BRI slug is a one-projectile load using a bomb-shaped bullet which rides the bore in a pair of sabots.*



more compatible with the typical police shotgun barrel. You get a larger percentage of hits and that's always better.

This is not the end of the shotgun ammo story. You can't tie it off the discussion without mentioning the excellent BRI slug. This is a single-projectile load with a one-ounce bomb-shaped projectile launched from the shell in a pair of sabots. Sabots in this sense are plastic "shoes" which ride the bore of the shotgun, carrying the single bullet up the bore undeformed. From earlier experiments, I can attest to the fact that they are exceptionally accurate in special shotguns with rifled bores and equipped with sights that allow you to aim them.

BRI currently produces a special law enforcement sabot load, primarily intended for penetration of auto bodies and other "hard" targets. Since the cop in an emergency situation isn't likely to have a special barrel and a scope on his shotgun, we tried the BPS that had served so well in the rest

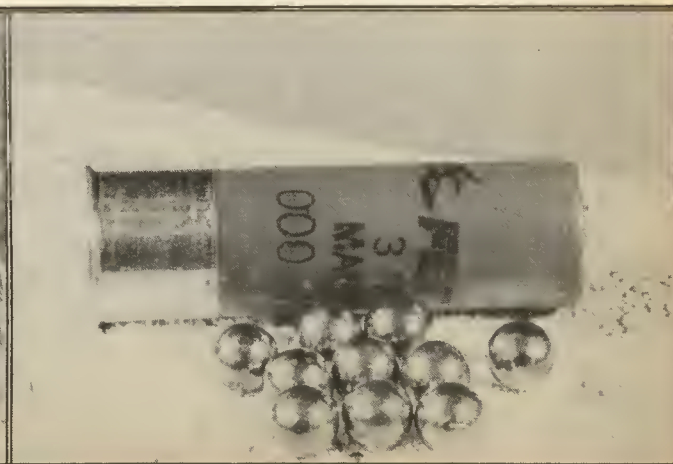
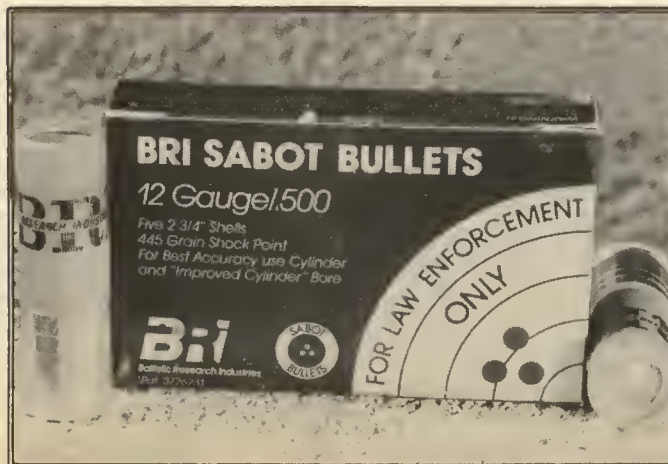
of the tests. It has a plain bead front sight.

At fifty yards, Joe Boyd had no problem in keeping three consecutive shots on the target. There wasn't any problem at seventy yards, either. At one hundred, he needed six shots to get three hits. He was adamant that he could do a great deal better with practice with that particular gun and ammo. I believe that he, and anyone else, could do just that with more gun-ammo familiarity. It's certain that he could be as far away as 150 yards and absolutely Swiss-cheese the average automobile. These super-slugs should be in every law enforcement agency's inventory.

Buckshot is the common denominator in quickly resolved police shootings. What size and type is up to you, but it's clear that, if there is any change, it ought to be toward the larger size. Bigger buckshot bests the bad guys.

*With a plain police shotgun, the BRI slug is accurate to beyond 100 yards. The slug weighs about one ounce and the aerodynamic shape means that it will retain energy better than conventional rifled slugs. All cops need 'em.*

*This is the author's recommendation as the best load to be used in shotguns with the longer chamber. #000 buck in the three-inch magnum load — ten pellets of .36-inch diameter. The percentage of misses is sharply reduced.*





## CHAPTER NINE



# UPDATING THE SCATTERGUN

*Ugly Brutes — Not Likely To Find Their Way To The Duck Blind,  
But Well Suited For The Shotgun Racks Of SWAT Vans.*

**T**O SAY that the law enforcement community is conservative about the weapons it uses is gross understatement. The average cop of today would be right at home with the Smith & Wesson Military & Police .38 Special revolver and Winchester Model 97 12-gauge pump shotgun available at the beginning of this century. Indeed, most of today's police are armed with revolvers and 12-gauge pump-action shotguns that are precisely the functional equivalent of what was available about 1902 or before. One major department still issues double-barreled shotguns! How many of these same police officers would be satisfied with using an automobile from the same period? Precious few, I would bet!

Yet, just as we are seeing a slow-but-sure trend in law enforcement toward more efficient and effective handguns such as medium-frame .357 magnum revolvers, high capacity 9mm autoloaders and .45 automatics, there also is a trend in police shotguns away from the traditional 12-gauge pump by having a shorter barrel and, in some cases, a larger capacity magazine, but little else. This is true even of most of the few semi-auto shotguns employed by police. This all is about to change with good reason.

It is remarkable that the traditional police pump shotgun has held on as long as it has; it is far from ideal for its purpose. Its major detractors center around the awkward and slow to load and unload tubular magazine. Indirectly, the tube magazine also contributed to the widespread preju-



dice against the semi-automatic shotgun for police use. The reason for this is that, when shotgun shells are left too long in a tube magazine — particularly the old paper shells and particularly in heavy springed extension magazines — they have a tendency to swell or mushroom a bit. It is largely the pump shotgun's superior ability to handle such mistreated shells that fostered the myth that the pump is more reliable than the auto.

I say myth, because there have likely been several times more malfunctions caused by the pump shotgun being short-stroked when an officer is under stress. In addition, the much more complicated manual of arms for loading, firing and unloading the pump shotgun over the autoloading shotgun has contributed to many accidental discharges

and the inability to fire when necessary. The widespread prejudice against the autoloading shotgun in police circles is not justified, particularly since the advent of the almost universally used plastic shotgun shell.

A good example of how reliable semi-auto shotguns can be was seen in their extensive use in Malaya by British counterinsurgency forces in the 1950s. It was found that the Browning A-5 shotguns deployed in Malaya were extremely reliable in spite of the horribly wet and dirty jungle conditions that no U.S. cop will ever have to face.

Yet, prejudice against autos is so firmly entrenched that one of our better law enforcement autoloading shotguns, the Franchi SPAS 12, actually has a built-in pump-action override to give it more appeal to the skeptics.



*The SPAS 12 is ugly in the extreme, but it is uncommonly durable and effective, causing the law enforcement beholder to re-think his concepts of beauty. The idea is to find something that will get it done.*

*Left, facing page: Typical police shotgun is the ubiquitous pump. Most agencies are using them for routine patrol work, with the exotics reserved for SWAT/raid use.*

*You can't deny the businesslike look of the SPAS 12. It bears little resemblance to a Parker double, but shoots the same ammunition. If the look of the gun will serve to intimidate, so much the better.*







*The gun pictured here is a prototype from the CAWS (Close Assault Weapons System) program. Made by H&K, the gun has most of the features that author Karwan feels will be on the battle shotguns of the next decade.*

One factor that will have a great influence on the police shotgun of tomorrow is the U. S. military's on-going Close Assault Weapons System (CAWS) developmental program. Virtually all the shotguns under development for the CAWS program are autoloaders. Actually, most even have a full-automatic capability, though I cannot foresee any circumstance where such a capability would not be better served by fast semi-auto fire for police or military applications. Regardless, the guns that come out of this program should have a ready market in a semi-auto-only version with law enforcement.

Regardless of the advantages of a semi-auto shotgun for police use, the pump shotgun can and will serve superbly if we get rid of the tubular magazine and replace it with a detachable box magazine. The advantages of a detachable

box magazine are so enormous that it is unbelievable that they have been so long coming. They offer near-instantaneous loading and unloading compared to the tedious one-at-a-time procedure of the tube magazine. Magazines can be left loaded for long periods without danger of shell deformation. They also offer the ability to change quickly from buckshot to slugs, tear gas or other special rounds. In addition there is much less opportunity for an accidental discharge when unloading. Fortunately, most of the contenders in the CAWS program also feed from detachable box or drum magazines, so they bear watching from that aspect also.

Thus, the state-of-the-art law enforcement shotgun of the near future will be a 12-gauge pump-action or semi-auto shotgun with a detachable magazine. It will also likely



*The SPAS 12 uses a tubular magazine, which the author contends will eventually disappear. He prefers the box magazine for reasons stated in the text. This view shows the SPAS 12 being fired with the stock fully extended.*





*Under the exterior shell, this is a Mossberg Model 500 shotgun. It's called a bull pup. Considerably shorter than a conventional police shotgun, the Mossberg has a place in raid and stakeout applications, possibly more.*

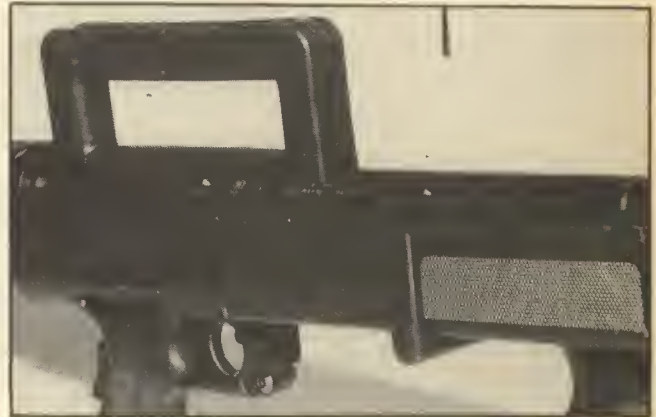
be fielded with an assault rifle-type pistol-grip stock and may even be of the bull pup configuration.

(For those of you not familiar with the term "bull pup," it describes a long gun that has its action displaced to the rear in the butt stock area. Currently popular in assault rifles, the bull pup system offers a short overall length without sacrificing barrel length.)

Unfortunately, as this is written there is no shotgun with all of the above features available for police purchase. There are a number, however, that promise to be on the market in the near future and I will attempt to provide a preview. First, however, let's look at three excellent law enforcement shotguns presently available that will not be mistaken for short-barreled versions of hunting shotguns, though each has as its heart just such a basic hunting shotgun.

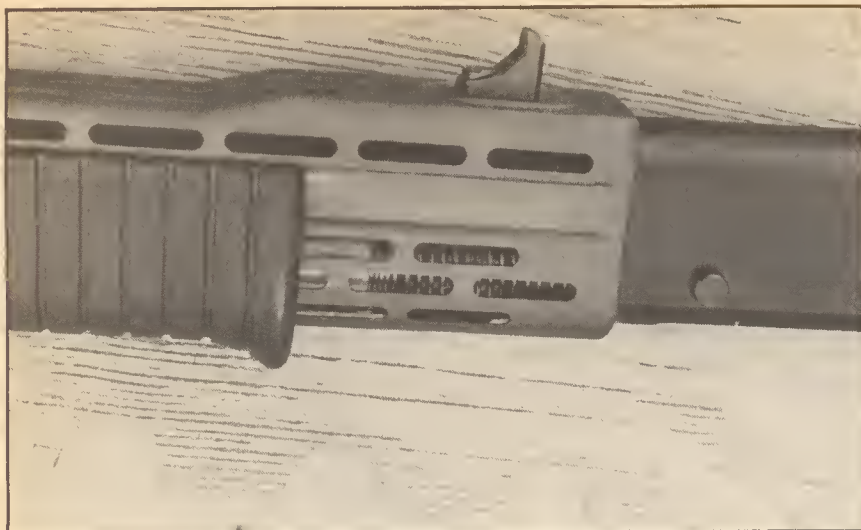
The first of these is the Mossberg Bull Pup. This exotic-looking beast uses the bull pup concept to achieve a short overall length without resorting to a folding stock. It consists basically of a Mossberg Model 500 barreled action in a tough Du Pont Zytel-33 plastic shell. It is laid out in a bull pup configuration with a pistol grip at mid-point. It weighs a hefty nine pounds, but handles quite well. Performance-wise it cannot do anything that any other 12-gauge pump shotgun can't do equally as well. Its major advantage is that its short overall length makes it handier in confined places, vehicles, helicopters, etc. Unlike the folding stock shotguns, it has but one configuration and consequently is always ready for shooting from the shoulder. It is still a pump with all the inherent problems and limitations of the system. Worse still, it has a tube magazine and can be even more awkward to reload than a conventional pump shotgun. It would be twice the gun with a detachable box magazine. Because shells are ejected to the right, it is much less than ideal for anyone to operate from the left shoulder as even a right-handed person is forced to do when firing around the left side of cover.

*Some of the Mossberg bullpup's different features are seen in this photo. The hot barrel is shielded from the shooter's grasp by a ventilated handguard. Also note an assault rifle-type carrying handle molded into the stock.*



*There's even a grip safety in the pistol grip. The device prevents the gun from firing unless it is compressed by the shooter's firing hand. The Mossberg also has a cross bolt safety in the forward portion of the trigger guard.*





*This close-up view of the SPAS shows the heavy sheet steel and moulded plastic construction. The mechanism is unique: shooter's choice of pump or automatic!*

Some authorities claim that the Mossberg 500 Bull Pup makes all its competition obsolete. I would not go so far as that, though it is certainly an excellent shotgun in its own right. Its reasonable cost and intimidating look almost insure that it will be popular with the law enforcement community.

Like the Mossberg Bull Pup, appearance of the Franchi SPAS 12 makes it a most intimidating shotgun. It is available in two basic configurations: with a folding stock and with a fixed assault-rifle-type stock. Both versions feature a pistol grip. The heart of the SPAS 12 is a much modified Franchi gas-operated autoloading shotgun. Unique among shotguns, the SPAS 12 can be switched quickly from auto to pump in the event of a jam of the semi-automatic action. Being a long-time user of a sporting Franchi auto

shotgun, I can state unequivocally that you might have to wait a long time for that to happen. The Franchi autos are extremely reliable.

I have a friend who runs a shooting school in England where practical shotgun shooting is quite popular. He has a couple of SPAS 12s that have seen tens of thousands of rounds through them. They just use them as semi-autos and ignore the pump feature. Personally, I believe the pump feature of these guns is superfluous. It contributes to the gun's heavy weight of ten pounds and makes the mechanism unnecessarily complicated. Also, the Franchi SPAS 12 is burdened with a hunting shotgun-style tubular magazine. As a consequence, it is still a good bit away from the ideal enforcement shotgun.

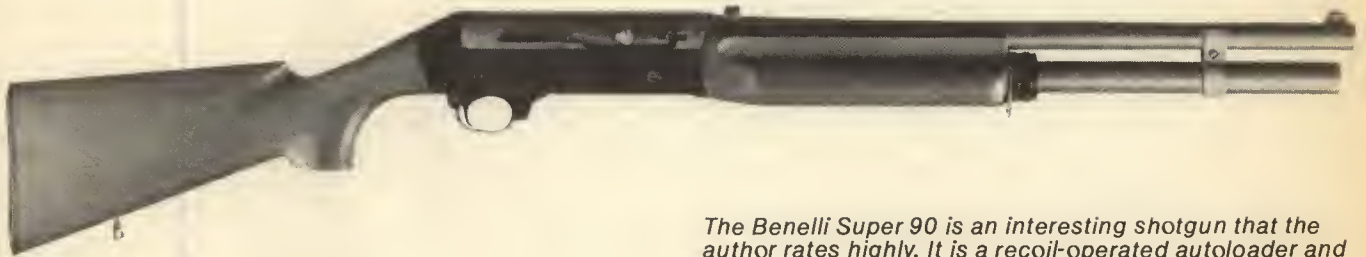
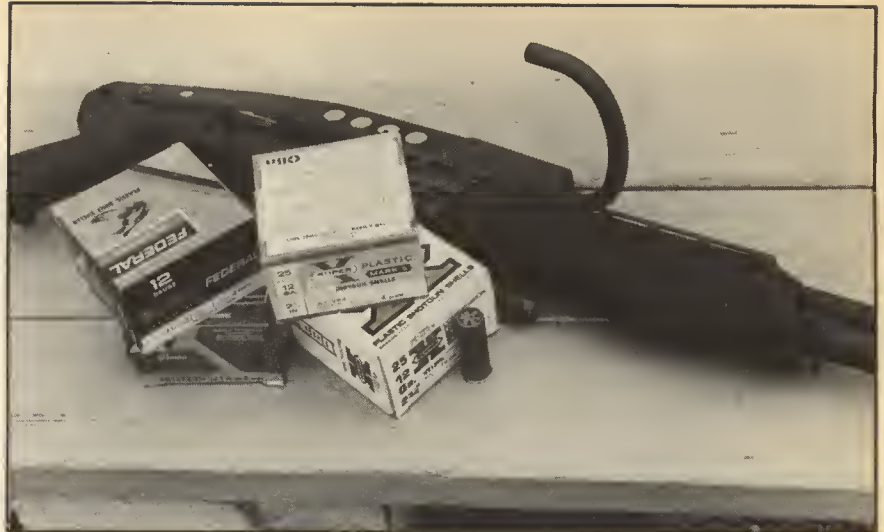
I also have reservations about gas-operated shotguns for

*On the range at LAPD during a firepower expo several years ago, the SPAS 12 got a lot of attention. Karwan sees the gun as transitional, a massive step towards a law enforcement shotgun for the Twenty-first Century.*





*With the unique pump or auto system, the SPAS 12 will digest nearly any kind of ammunition. This might be of value in some extreme emergency situations. Unique folding stock pivots across the top of the gun's receiver as seen here.*



*The Benelli Super 90 is an interesting shotgun that the author rates highly. It is a recoil-operated autoloader and Karwan prefers that to a gas-operated gun. The main drawback is the fragile tube magazine under the barrel.*

any law enforcement agency that does not employ an armorer to maintain its guns. The reason is that, for complete reliability, a gas-operated shotgun should have its gas system cleaned every two or three hundred rounds. Without an armorer, the possibility of a gas-operated shotgun not getting the required maintenance is too high. The average cop would not even know how to disassemble and clean it, unless he received special training. Also, the possibility of someone innocently oiling the gas system when it should not be oiled is high. In some guns an oiled gas system will quickly lead to a gummed-up malfunctioning gun.

The alternative is to stick to recoil-operated autoloading shotguns. The best in this regard on the market is the Benelli Super 90 marketed by Heckler & Koch. This superb shotgun has no gas system to worry about and, unlike most recoil-operated shotguns, does not have a reciprocating barrel. This facilitates the stable mounting of the magazine tube extension.

The Super 90 is available with a conventional or pistol-grip assault-style stock. Its major disadvantage is that it has a tubular magazine. Of what is currently available, the Super 90 would be my pick for law enforcement purposes. If it had a detachable box magazine it would be nearly ideal. Benelli also should investigate making a bull pup version.

Though the Super 90 is the only law enforcement shotgun presently marketed by H&K, there is another with considerable potential in the developmental stage. This interesting piece is a recoil-operated bull pup 12-gauge that can be fired either full-automatic or semi-automatic. Instead of firing one of the standard 12-gauge rounds, it uses a special rimless belted 12-gauge shell fed from a box magazine. This special round was developed by the Olin Corporation and exceeds the performance of even the 12-gauge three-inch magnum cartridge. For example, one general purpose loading fires eight 70-grain lead 000 buckshot of .36-inch diameter at 1500 feet per second. That is roughly equivalent to eight 9mm parabellums at close range with one pull of the trigger.

This H&K was developed for the previously mentioned U.S. government CAWS program. As this is written, it is not scheduled for production but awaits further development with the CAWS program. Should it go into production for the military, there is little doubt there also will be a law enforcement version. In this particular case, the special Olin-developed belted rimless 12-gauge ammunition also could revolutionize law enforcement shotgun ammunition. I suspect, however, that special loads would be developed for law enforcement to cut down the recoil and muzzle blast as well as minimize the dangers of over-



*The USAS 12 has a contour and controls that are easy for ex-GIs to use. The gun bears a marked resemblance to the M16. This one has the box magazine in place but there's also a twenty-eight-shot drum being developed.*

penetration that would be present with the military loads.

The first of the new state-of-the-art law enforcement shotguns to actually become available probably will be the Korean-made Daewoo USAS-12. The selective fire version was scheduled to go into production in January 1987 and become available to law enforcement agencies shortly thereafter through the Gilbert Equipment Co.

This superbly designed gas-operated automatic shotgun is configured much like an M16 rifle with a straight-line butt stock, pistol grip, carrying handle and detachable box magazine. The barrel is mounted low below the gas sys-

tem, giving the USAS-12 straight-back recoil characteristics with little or no muzzle rise. A semi-automatic-only version is scheduled to be produced in the near future; however, it, too, will be available only to law enforcement agencies. Incredible as this may seem, the BATF has reportedly ruled that it cannot be imported for general con-



*Not a really small or particularly compact firearm, the USAS 12 is nevertheless the best balance between weight and firepower of anything currently produced. Made in Korea by Daewoo Precision Industries, it's well made.*





*From Italy, and the Bernardelli plant, there comes this entry in the battle shotgun derby. It is a police shotgun with a box magazine and side-folding stock. It also has the carrying handle on top, which is a valuable feature.*

sumption, because it does not *look* like a sporting shotgun. There is no question that it would be ideal for such sports as practical shotgun competition and bowling pin shooting. Maybe the BATF will relent.

The USAS-12 will be particularly easy to learn to handle for veterans who have had training on the M16 rifle, because of the shotgun's retention of much of the M16's excellent human engineering and configuration. All indications are that the Daewoo will be a hard act to follow for future introducers of box magazine-fed autoloading shotguns for law enforcement.

Not all activity in the law enforcement shotgun area is autoloading. The Italian firm of Bernardelli has developed prototype versions of a superb pump shotgun targeted for the police market. When it becomes available, it will be marketed by the Springfield Armory company. As this is written, production has not yet been scheduled for this interesting gun. Designed to fulfill the demand for a high tech state-of-the-art pump shotgun for law enforcement, the Bernardelli Police Pump has a number of interesting features. Like the Daewoo, it is constructed in an M16 rifle configuration complete with straight-line butt stock, pistol

grip, carrying handle and box magazine. Unlike the Daewoo, the butt stock on the Bernardelli folds to the side for easy storage and for handling in tight quarters. At the same time, it retains the pump operation so near and dear to many police officers and agencies. It promises to be a front-runner in the pump-action field.

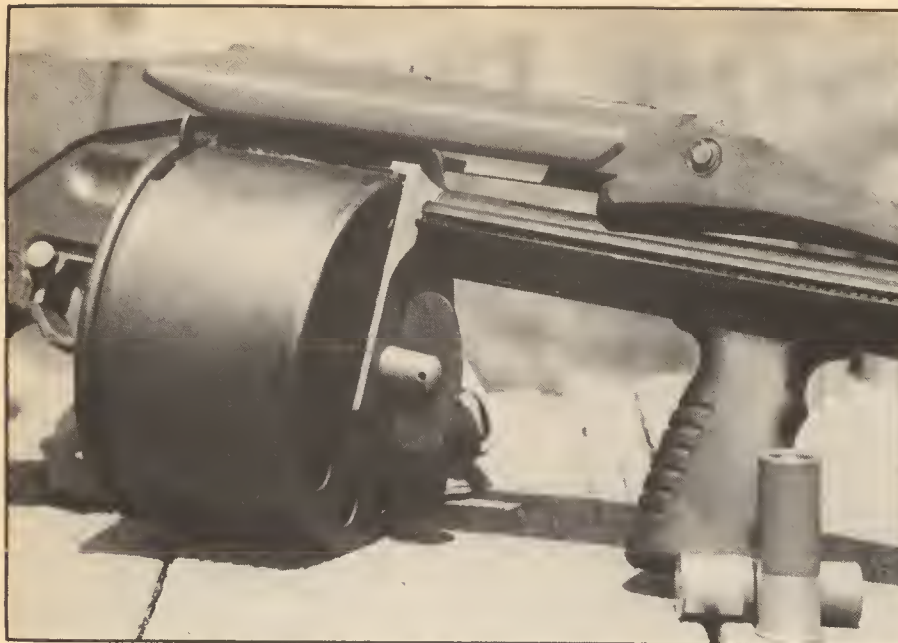
Another police shotgun soon will be available that is neither a pump nor an autoloader.

This is the Striker-12 revolving shotgun, marketed by Law Enforcement Ordnance. Developed in South Africa, this twelve-shot 12-gauge owes much of its design to the American Manville revolving gas guns of the 1930s. The Striker is unique in the shotgun world. To the best of my knowledge, it is the first revolving shotgun to reach production status since Colt stopped making revolving percussion shotguns during the Civil War.

The Striker's cylinder is driven by a wound spring much in the same manner as the Thompson submachine gun (SMG) drum magazine. In fact, with its front and rear pistol grips, folding stock and drum-like cylinder, the Striker looks all the world like a SMG, until you get a glance at its 12-gauge muzzle.

*Like the USAS 12, the South African Striker shotgun is fitted with what appears to be a drum magazine. In use, it's really more like the cylinder on a great big revolver. The Striker is a simple, sturdy and ingenious mechanism.*





*On a Striker, the device alongside the barrel is the extractor rod and it works exactly like the western-styled single-action revolver. The Striker comes from South Africa and that fact may serve to obstruct its availability in the United States.*

It will fire twelve shots as fast as you can pull the trigger, which is double the firepower of your typical police pump shotgun. Reloading is slow, however, since each fired shell has to be ejected manually, *a la* Colt Single Action, with an ejector rod and individual chambers reloaded. The feeling is that, after firing twelve rounds, the pressure for a fast reload should be off. In most police roles I am sure that is true; however, a two- or three-second reload with a box magazine is still preferable, in my opinion.

The Striker does have several unique advantages. One is that it is not dependent on a certain power level to cycle the action as are the autoloaders. Consequently, one can fire special rounds such as tear gas, blanks or rubber bullets as fast as he can pull the trigger. This is not possible in the typical autoloader, though a pump shotgun can have a fast rate of fire with such rounds. Also, the Striker has the capability of skipping chambers through trigger manipulation. Theoretically one could alternately load buckshot and slugs, giving a selective capability. I say *theoretically*,

because in my experience, such complicated executions fall by the wayside in the stress of a firefight.

Regardless, the Striker is a striking looking weapon (pun intended) with useful capabilities for law enforcement. Presently it is being produced in Portugal for the world market to circumvent the sanctions against South Africa. It is importable only by law enforcement agencies and not for private individuals, since it has been ruled as not suitable for sporting purposes by the BATF. Production in the U. S. was scheduled to begin some time in early 1987. This should make it more readily available to agencies as well as to individual officers and private citizens.

That about wraps up what is available or is soon to be

*With stock folded, the Striker is compact and easy to handle. It's also pretty light. The unique import could also serve as a duty shotgun for patrol car use — it's a natural for getting in and out of a dash rack quickly.*





available to law enforcement in the way of high-tech modernized shotguns. There are a number of other guns in the prototype stage at other firms, but it is unlikely that any will see the light of day in the near future. It is notable that the big U.S. manufacturers, with the sole exception of Mossberg, have largely ignored this area or kept their activities highly secret. Ithaca, manufacturer of the excellent Model 37 series of police shotguns, has gone belly-up. This leaves

only Remington and U.S. Repeating Arms (Winchester) to step into this field currently dominated by European and Asian manufacturers. The trend and market for an improved law enforcement shotgun is strong enough that we can expect considerable future activity in this area, all to the advantage of the boys in blue.

*Battle shotguns will eventually replace the pumpguns in all law enforcement applications, but they are presently too expensive to supplant the older guns. This is a field of police weaponry that's likely to develop quite rapidly.*

## SOURCES

Franchi SPAS-12  
Firearms Import and Export Corp (F.I.E.)  
P.O. Box 4866  
Hialeah, FL 33014  
(305) 685-5966

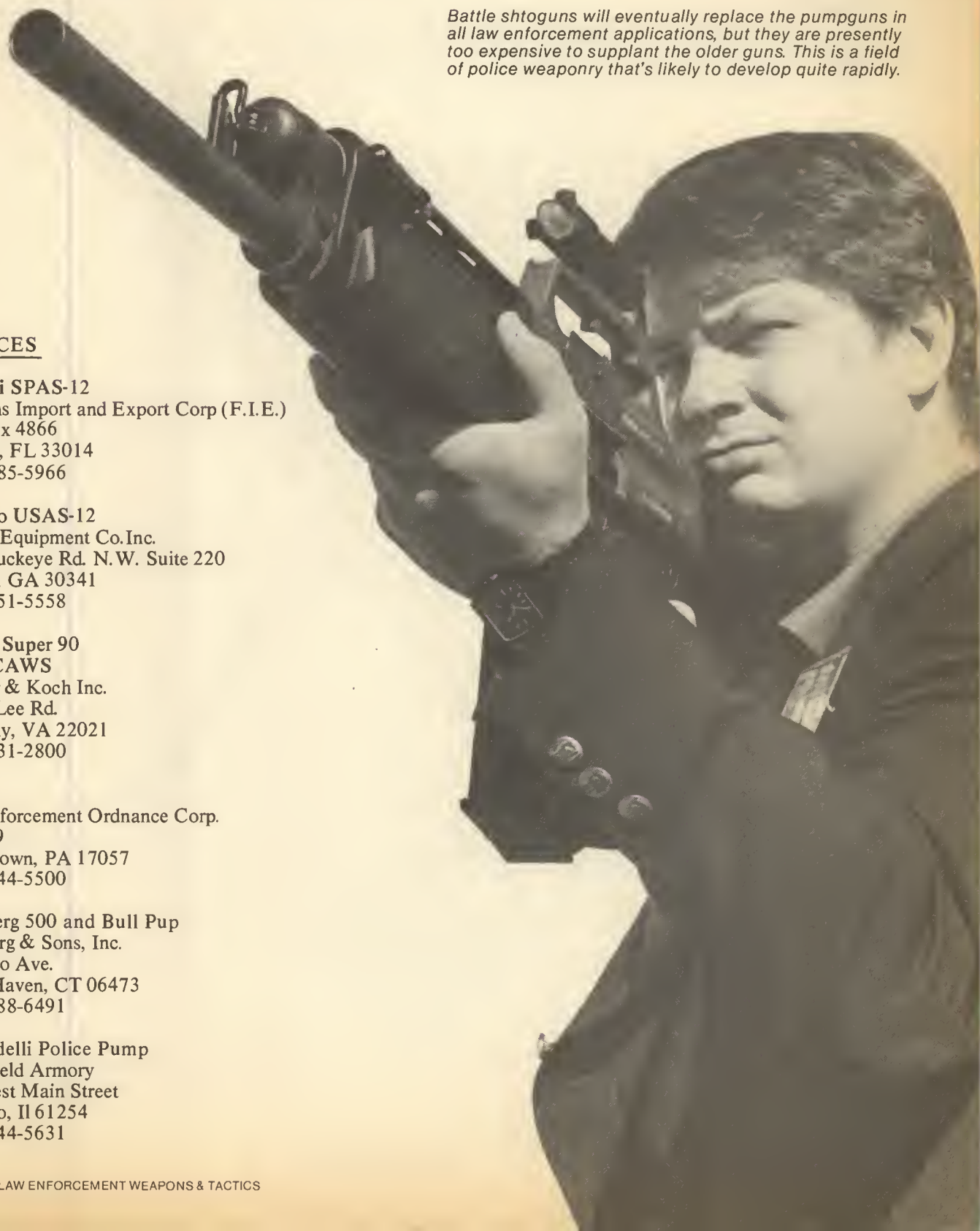
Daewoo USAS-12  
Gilbert Equipment Co. Inc.  
3300 Buckeye Rd. N.W. Suite 220  
Atlanta, GA 30341  
(404) 451-5558

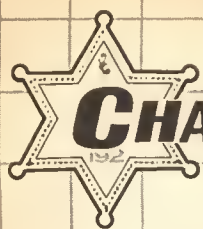
Benelli Super 90  
H&K CAWS  
Heckler & Koch Inc.  
14601 Lee Rd.  
Chantilly, VA 22021  
(703) 631-2800

Striker  
Law Enforcement Ordnance Corp.  
Box 649  
Middletown, PA 17057  
(717) 944-5500

Mossberg 500 and Bull Pup  
Mossberg & Sons, Inc.  
7 Grasso Ave.  
North Haven, CT 06473  
(203) 288-6491

Bernardelli Police Pump  
Springfield Armory  
420 West Main Street  
Geneseo, IL 61254  
(309) 944-5631

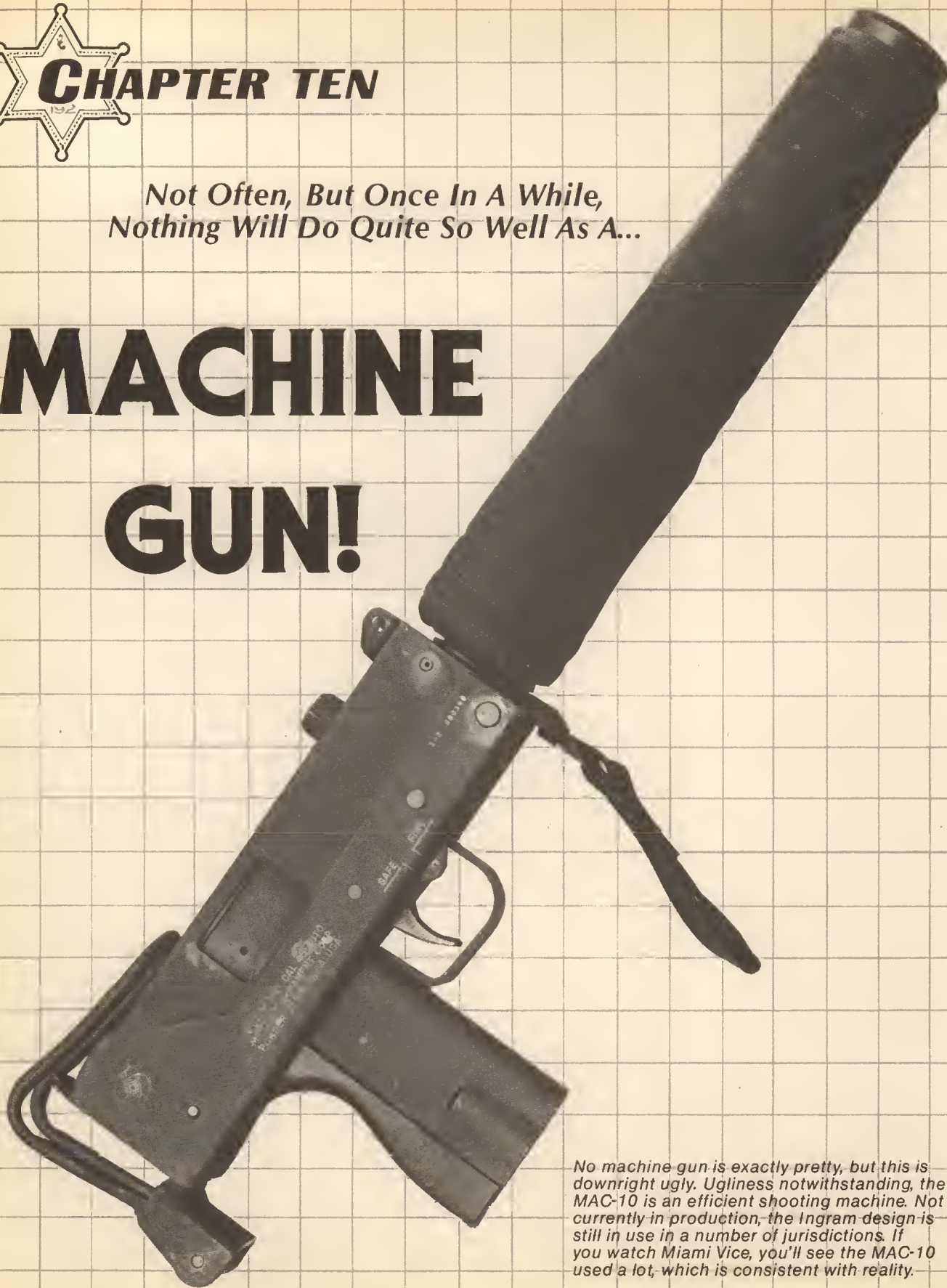




## CHAPTER TEN

*Not Often, But Once In A While,  
Nothing Will Do Quite So Well As A...*

# MACHINE GUN!



*No machine gun is exactly pretty, but this is downright ugly. Ugliness notwithstanding, the MAC-10 is an efficient shooting machine. Not currently in production, the Ingram design is still in use in a number of jurisdictions. If you watch Miami Vice, you'll see the MAC-10 used a lot, which is consistent with reality.*





*Frank Nagle of the Huntington Beach Police Department SWAT Team uses a MAC-10 on some occasions. There is a hefty insulated suppressor on this one. The device will unscrew from the barrel and the resulting gun is extremely compact, controlled by using holding strap at the muzzle.*

**F**EW POLICEMEN need a machine gun. The vast majority of tactical situations that the average cop will encounter on the street won't require that sort of overwhelming firepower. Most of the time, the blackhat who's caught in the act of doin' his wrongdoin' won't have much in the way of armament — a handgun usually, maybe a sawed-off shotgun. Firearms found in most patrol cars should handle any situation without difficulty.

But what if they can't?

There are lots of recent incidents in the United States where organized criminal gangs, usually involved with narcotics trafficking, have engaged in pitched battles with policemen. Some police agencies not only contend, but can actually *prove* they are undergunned. They can prove it by counting bullet holes and picking up the brass when the skirmishing is over.

Fortunately enough, this kind of war in the streets is a long way from an everyday occurrence. Despite the best efforts of TV shows like *Miami Vice*, it's doubtful that the south Florida city is *that* violent. The point is that there's enough chance that really heavy duty firefights will break out once in a while and it's best to be prepared.

The opening statement of this chapter still stands — few policemen need a machine gun — but the ones that do might *really* need one. It is that smaller percentage of the police community we'll deal with in the course of this chapter. More often than not, the policemen who need the machine gun or submachine gun are the officers who are assigned to the SWAT teams of their departments.

It isn't sensible or feasible to equip everyone in the patrol division with an automatic weapon any more than it is wise to equip everyone in the infantry with them. Automatics have a marked tendency towards overuse or misuse



*The submachine gun as a breed has fallen from favor to some degree. If it stages a comeback, the most likely gun to do it will be the excellent Heckler & Koch MP5. As discussed in the text, the MP5 has many advantages.*

in the hands of the untrained. There is so much firepower at the fingertips of the firer that rapid, uncontrolled fire is hard to resist. Movies and television haven't done much to dispel this idea, but it's best to point out that, when Rambo turns loose with a full belt from his M60, he's shooting blanks that don't rise or recoil.

With adequate training, many and maybe most, people can be taught to handle an automatic weapon with fair ability. It isn't that quick or easy to acquire the skill, however. Automatic weapons have individual characteris-

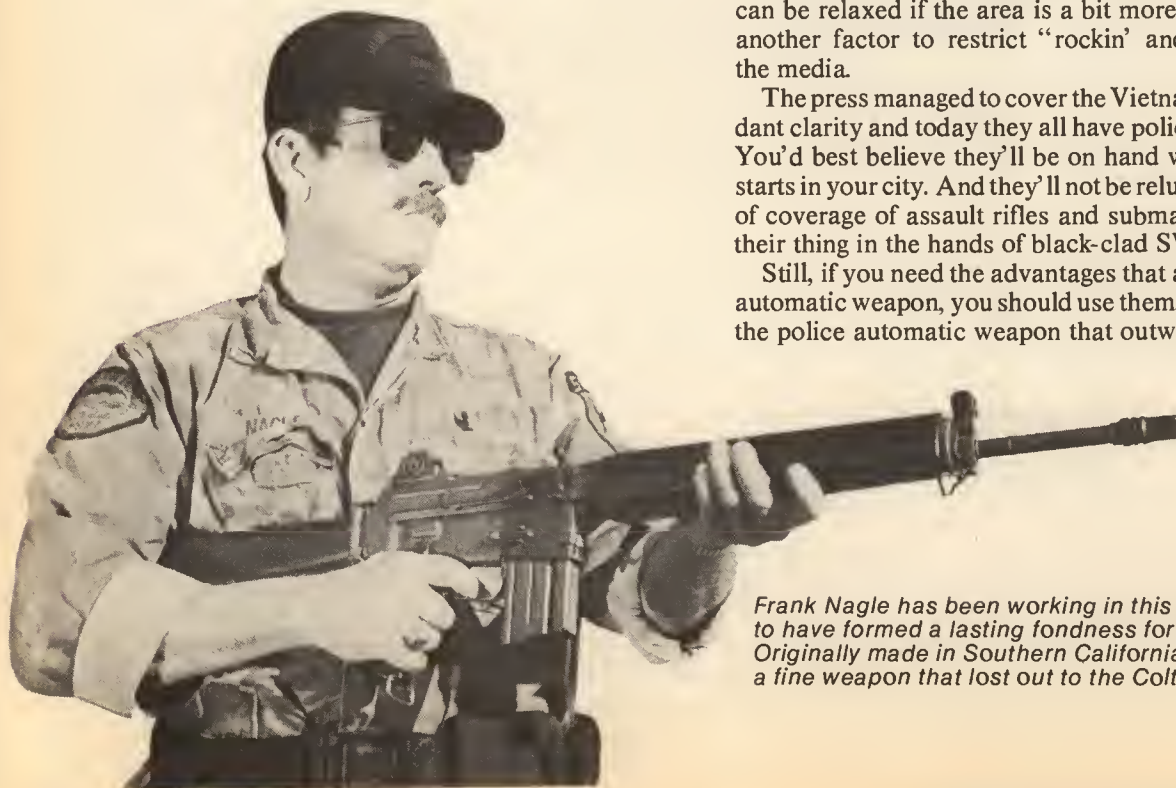
tics that must be mastered and the practice that will allow this is expensive in terms of time and ammunition. It doesn't make sense to conduct this sort of training for anyone except the people who actually will use the weapons in tactical situations.

That pretty well establishes that the machine guns ought to be left to the SWAT people who have need of them. It also brings us to the point that we can look hard at what the actual uses of the automatic weapon are. They are neither as common nor as automatic as you might think.

More often than not, the SWAT situation where the automatics are used will be in an urban setting. Firepower needs to be used sparingly because of the possible damage to adjacent buildings or other facilities. High-velocity fully-jacketed .223 rounds will ricochet for great distances and they're best used sparingly. Some of the restrictions can be relaxed if the area is a bit more rural, but there's another factor to restrict "rockin' and rollin'." That's the media.

The press managed to cover the Vietnam war with abundant clarity and today they all have police scanner radios. You'd best believe they'll be on hand when the shooting starts in your city. And they'll not be reluctant to get plenty of coverage of assault rifles and submachine guns doing their thing in the hands of black-clad SWAT officers.

Still, if you need the advantages that are inherent in the automatic weapon, you should use them. The one virtue of the police automatic weapon that outweighs all others is



*Frank Nagle has been working in this field long enough to have formed a lasting fondness for the Armalite rifle. Originally made in Southern California, the AR18 was a fine weapon that lost out to the Colt-produced M16.*



the ability of the gun to intimidate and force criminals down, under cover or otherwise immobilize them. This enables other officers to move into position to use gas, flash-bang grenades, battering rams, and even dogs — all in the interests of making a fast and efficient arrest. This latter goal, making an arrest, is exactly opposite from the military goal of destroying the enemy, although the infantry tactics principle of fire and maneuver is quite similar.

Another thing that some automatics are good for is the close-quarters placement of overwhelming firepower when every other means of taking someone out have been exhausted. This is particularly true in hostage rescue situations that have to be resolved quickly. In other words, in the assault.

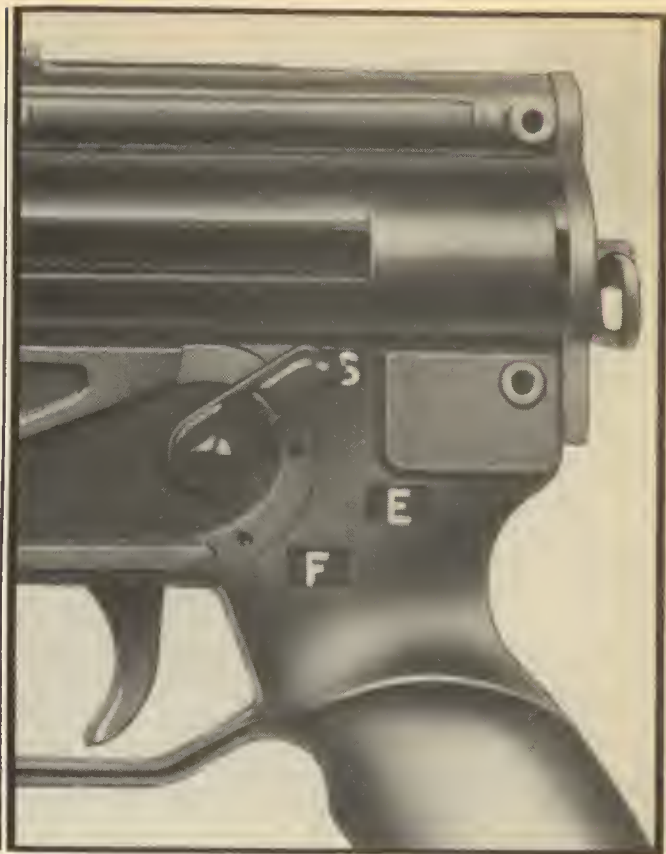
The current *wundergun* in military circles is the assault rifle. There are lots of different ones in use around the world and many of them are available to U.S. police agencies. As a class, the assault rifles are usually fairly light and compact full automatic firearms with high capacity magazines. The norm is thirty rounds. While some are made in civilian-legal semi-automatic versions, they are all produced originally as full autos. With rare exceptions in the western world, they are chambered for the 5.56mm NATO round, also called the .223 Remington. Soviet bloc guns, not used in U.S. circles, are chambered for the 7.62x39mm Russian cartridge.

Some assault rifles are also made in 7.62mm NATO, or .308 Winchester. This is also the most common cartridge used in the SWAT team sniper rifles. It is superbly accurate and most worthwhile in carefully placed single shots. It may be excessively powerful in an automatic weapon, particularly in an urban setting.

If the .308 cartridge is a poor choice for a SWAT weapon cartridge, the .223 is better, but far from ideal. The problem is that neither of the rounds were intended for use by police agencies in cities — they are military rounds. In order to perform the necessary military functions, both rounds were fitted out with high-velocity spitzer pointed bullets with full metal jackets. They are designed to penetrate light armor and the new military body armor. Both will do so with varying degrees of efficiency and at a variety of ranges. In a city, these cartridges will ricochet off of pavement and other hard surfaces, ending up God knows where. They'll also penetrate stucco and wood-framed buildings. In some tactical situations, this latter trait may be useful; it can cause the criminals within such a building to lose their will to carry on.

More commonly however, the use of assault rifle cartridges should be most circumspect. Close-range battles are better fought with shotguns, and perhaps sometimes submachine guns. The assault rifle has a definite place in the scheme of things. It is sort of an all-purpose weapon — one that will do for the occasional medium to long-distance shot but also is capable of close-range firepower. The feature of the assault rifle that gives it redeeming versatility is a little lever somewhere on the each of them that enables the shooter to restrict the full auto to semi-automatic — the selector.

Well trained SWAT officers, like well trained infantrymen, will make the most of carefully placed single shots.



*Among the other features of the MP5, there's a lever that lets the shooter put the gun on safe, fire full auto or fire one shot at a time. The capability for dialing up single shots adds great versatility to any full automatic.*

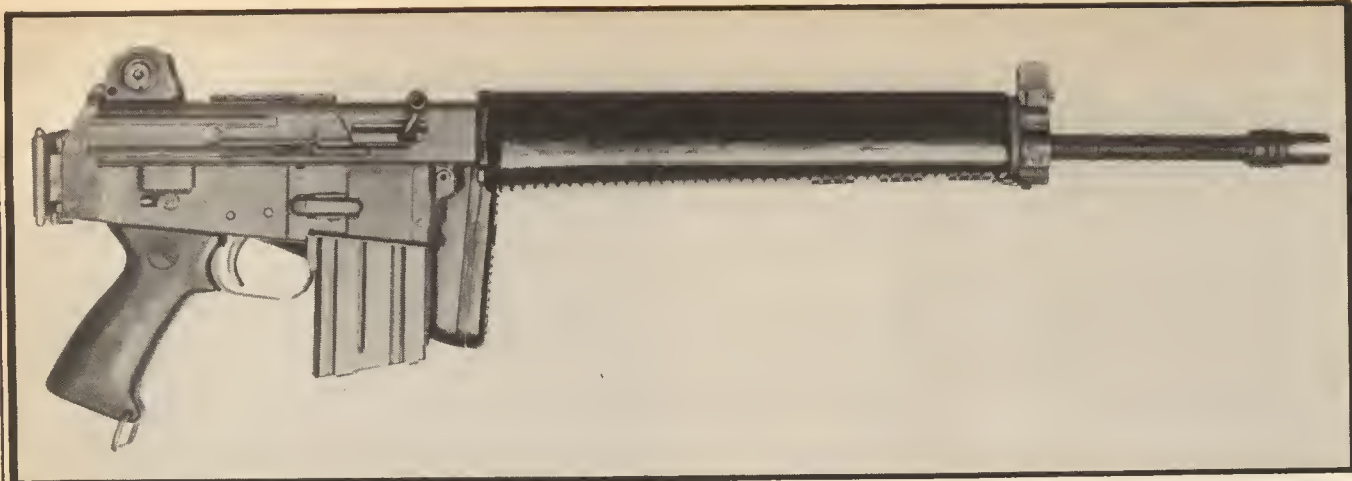
They'll keep the full auto feature in reserve for the close-in, no-holds-barred assault situations.

Some assault rifles, like the newer versions of the M16 and the Korean-made DaeWoo series, have an interesting feature. It is called a burst trigger and serves the worthwhile purpose of restricting the full auto to three shots for each pull of the trigger. If other characteristics of the assault rifle will allow it, the burst of three shots is most controllable. This is a worthwhile feature and must be used if it is available.

Other rifles creep into the picture from time to time, but the SWAT weapon market for assault rifles is pretty well dominated by Heckler & Koch and Colt.

Some of the other ones are guns like the excellent Steyr-AUG from Austria and the Korean DaeWoo K-series. The latter gun is a particularly well suited to deliver accurate and controllable full automatic fire. One version of the gun, called the K1A1 submachine gun, despite the .223 chambering, was fired extensively. Via the three-shot burst trigger, the gun will keep all shots on a silhouette target at ranges of as much as a hundred yards. The AUG, recently chosen as the service rifle of the Armed forces of Australia and New Zealand, is also a more than adequate gun.

But the market in the U.S. remains strongly dominated by the two big firms and no amount of SIGs, Valmets,



*The AR18 is still used in some places. Not many of them were made in the United States and Sterling of Great Britain has also taken them out of production. One of the better features was the folding stock shown here.*

Galils, FN's, Leaders, FAMAS or any number of other fine assault rifles have seriously challenged them for positions in the SWAT vans of the nation's police departments.

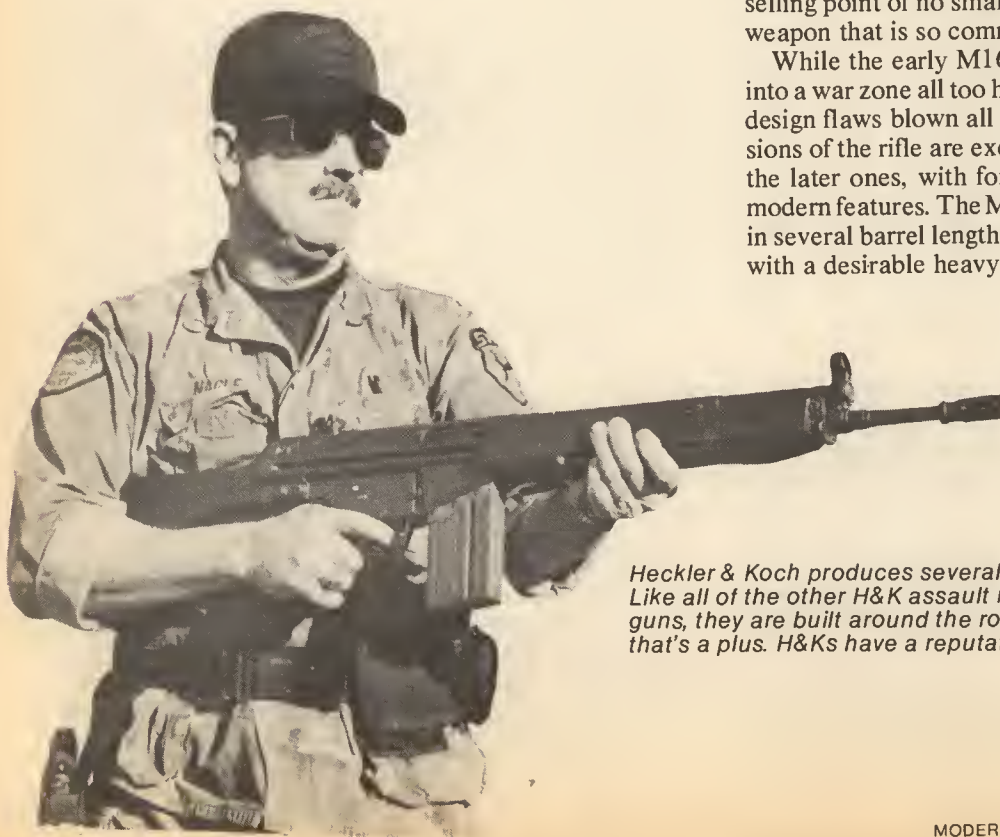
All of the German H&K guns are descendants of the G3 rifles of the immediate post-war period. They are constructed around the same roller-locked action. This is fundamentally a type of recoil operation and one that works well. Recoil is most manageable in all of the H&Ks. Roller-locking also spells a gun that handles the stresses of firing in such a way as to promote a long service life. They are expensive initially, but these German imports are fine weapons that last long enough to pay for themselves.

H&K assault rifles are made in both .223 and .308 versions. The .308s are in the 91 series and the .223s are the 93 series. Series is a good term for the H&Ks, since they are available with fixed or retractable butt stocks, with and without scopes, full or semi-auto. A sniper's version of the 91 serves as a backup rifle in many police sniper teams. Even the elegant PSG-1 sniper rifle, described by Mark Lonsdale in Chapter 11, is fundamentally a 91 action.

The Heckler & Kochs are good rifles, with features that are outstanding. The fixed plastic buttstock, preferable over the retracting metal one, was designed by a rifleman. It lets the shooter aim the piece carefully, but also makes full-auto fire about as controllable as anything in the class.

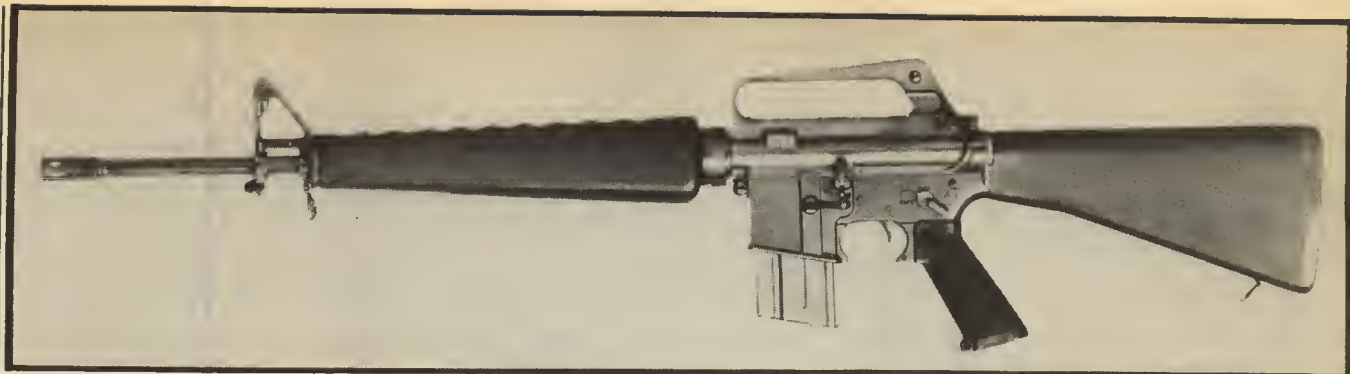
Colt makes the AR15 in semi-auto for the civilian market; the same gun in full-auto bears the military designation of M16. It is a firearm that has been used in the U.S. armed services since the early 1970s. The familiarity of hundreds of thousands of GIs with the rifle is a selling point of no small consequence. Training time on a weapon that is so common is drastically reduced.

While the early M16s were firearms that were rushed into a war zone all too hastily and therefore had their early design flaws blown all out of proportion, the current versions of the rifle are excellent. Police guns are likely to be the later ones, with forward assist assemblies and other modern features. The M16 from Colt is currently available in several barrel lengths, fixed or slideout stocks and even with a desirable heavy barrel.



*Heckler & Koch produces several versions of the HK93. Like all of the other H&K assault rifles and submachine guns, they are built around the roller-locked action and that's a plus. H&Ks have a reputation for reliability.*





*If this rifle were fitted with a selector lever, it would be an M16. Instead, it's an AR15. Either way, it's made by Colt and has the advantage of being used by armed forces. Lots of cops know how to use it.*

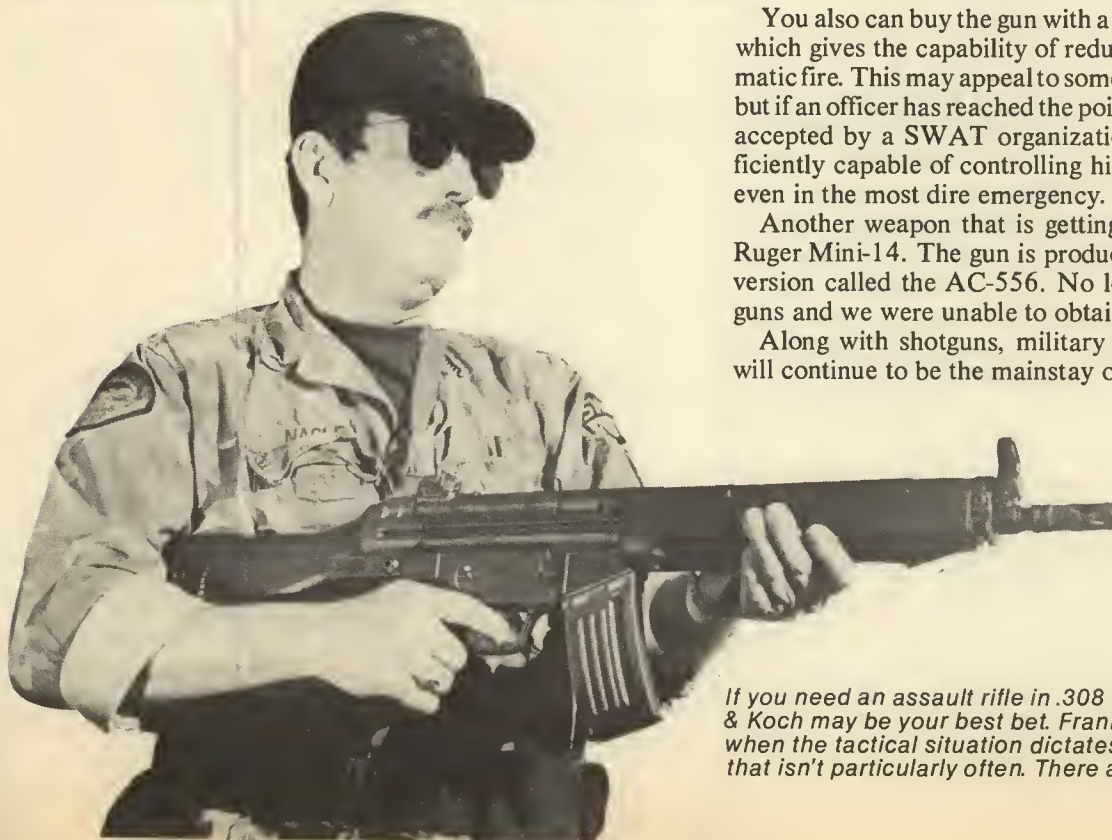
*In shortened form, the M16 becomes a bit more usable and handy. The main difference on this spectrum is the telescoping stock. Colt has also recently taken the basic M16 and made it a 9mmP submachine gun.*



You also can buy the gun with a three-shot burst trigger, which gives the capability of reducing unrestrained automatic fire. This may appeal to some cops more than others, but if an officer has reached the point in his training as to be accepted by a SWAT organization, he ought to be sufficiently capable of controlling his own automatic firing, even in the most dire emergency.

Another weapon that is getting some attention is the Ruger Mini-14. The gun is produced in a short, full-auto version called the AC-556. No local agency uses these guns and we were unable to obtain one for evaluation.

Along with shotguns, military assault rifles probably will continue to be the mainstay of police SWAT teams.

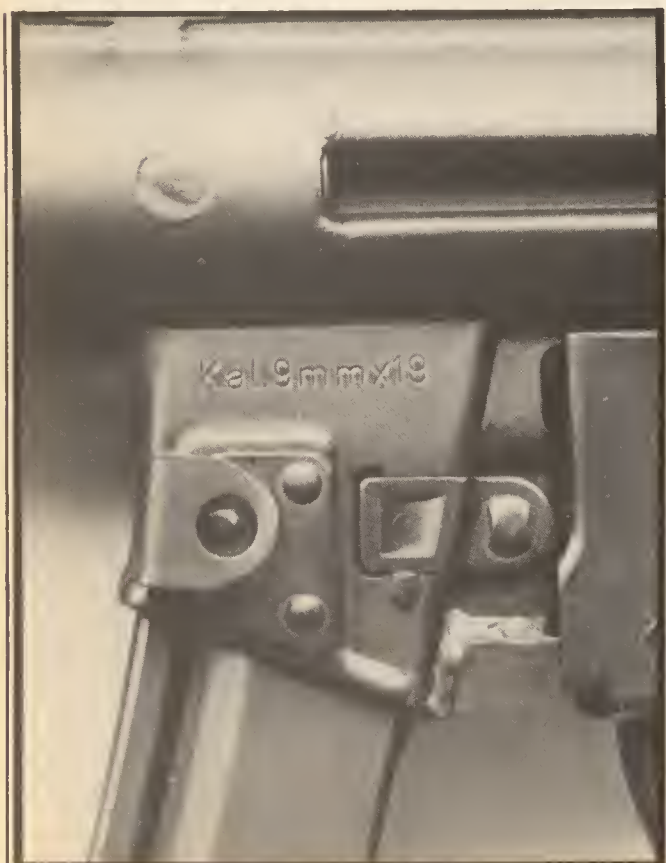


*If you need an assault rifle in .308 caliber, the Heckler & Koch may be your best bet. Frank Nagle uses the HK91 when the tactical situation dictates. In urban settings, that isn't particularly often. There are ricochet problems.*



*UZI! The contour is unmistakable and has become as familiar as the Thompson once was. The Israeli gun is a simple one, economical to produce and has a good reputation for reliability under rough field conditions. With the overhung bolt it's compact, making it well suited for law enforcement use.*

*Below: Caliber designation on the Heckler & Koch MP5 is 9mmx19. That's the world's most popular pistol round and the most common in submachine guns as well. It is particularly well-suited to those big burpgun magazines.*



Whichever make is chosen, H&K or Colt, the guns are time-tested and proven full autos — portable machine guns — that can give that extra flexibility to armed response in emergencies.

But they aren't the only full-auto weapons worthy of consideration. There's another entire class of the fast-firing weapons that we haven't yet discussed. This is the submachine gun.

Submachine guns were slowly fading from the scene several decades ago. No new guns had been introduced since the World War II era in the United States, but not so in the rest of the world. Designers abroad were busy churning out a number of excellent submachine gun designs. With a few exceptions, the guns were chambered for the 9mmP cartridge, the most universally used pistol cartridge in the world.

Submachine guns have some real virtues for American police use. They are usually far more portable than any other weapon of comparable power. As 9mmPs, they can be controlled well with training. They fire ammunition that is much less likely to ricochet than the .223 or .308. Many submachine guns are simple mechanisms that can be produced rather inexpensively. If they have any faults, it would have to be the high cyclic rate in some guns that make it necessary to spend a fair amount of time teaching the gunner to control.

Once again, the market is dominated by two guns. They are the Israeli-made UZI and the German Heckler & Koch MP-5. The U.S.-made Ingram MAC-10 was made for several years in fair numbers, but the original company has gone out of business and the future of the gun is in some doubt. The same is true of the Viking, another American product, which has ceased to be made.

The UZI seems to roll on forever. It was the first product





*Seen here with fixed stock and long magazine, the MP5 is rapidly becoming the free world's most popular police submachine gun. The gun fires from a closed-bolt mode and can therefore be used as a semi-auto short rifle. It is often the weapon of choice for hostage rescue units that must make precise close shots.*

of the arms industry of Israel. It is a simple, sturdy gun made of sheet metal stampings. The UZI is widely known, having been used by the U.S. Secret Service. Like the Viking, MAC-10, French MAT-49, Walther MP — and nearly all other submachine guns, — the UZI fires from an open bolt. This means that when the trigger is released, the bolt moves forward, feeds a round from the magazine into the chamber and fires it. Recoil forces blow the operating parts back against the tension of the recoil spring and the weight of the bolt. It works well, but it's best for pointed rather than aimed fire.

The problem is that the bolt movement prior to firing is disturbing to the shooter. Since most of the open-bolt guns are light, the movement of a heavy bolt is downright annoying. This is why the H&K MP5 is so popular.

This gun is really nothing more than a somewhat miniaturized H&K assault rifle. Firing from a closed and roller-locked bolt, the MP5 will deliver accurate single shots or bursts out to as much as one hundred yards. It was the MP5 that was in the hands of the British Special Air Service troopers when they conducted the textbook-perfect rescue operation at the Iranian embassy in London. The

*There are a number of variations of the MP5. This one has the retracting stock and a shorter magazine. Every feature of the gun is "user-friendly," made to be handled and carried under emergency circumstances. The rear sight offers a choice of apertures. The cocking handle is in an unusual but practical location.*





*The cocking handle of the MP5 is mounted on the left side of the gun well forward and out of the way. It doesn't reciprocate in firing. To lock the bolt back, just pull back and turn upwards as shown here. The front sight is protected by a ring.*

accuracy characteristic is what puts this submachine gun in the hands of so many of the world's best SWAT policemen.

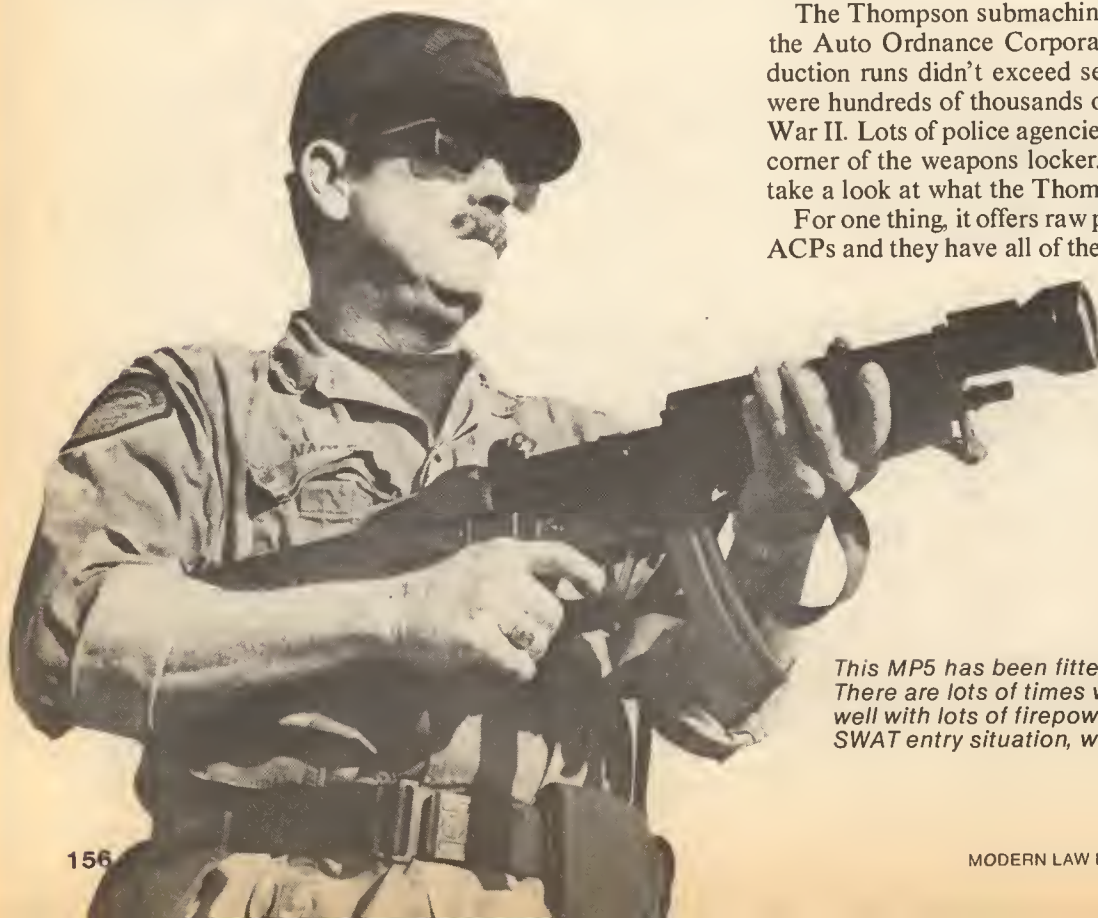
The H&K submachine gun is available in many versions, with fixed or retractable stocks, different barrels and even a sound suppressed gun. Only in the recent past, since Colt offered the M16 in 9mmP as a true submachine gun, has anything come along that challenged the excellent

Heckler & Koch. There aren't enough of the Colts in active service to establish a reputation as of yet.

Long ago, Colt produced another submachine gun. It wasn't their own design, but it was the first submachine gun in our history. The gun was invented by a retired Army colonel who saw it as a portable weapon that would serve to end the stalemated trench warfare of World War I. He called it a "trench broom" and history called it the Tommy Gun.

The Thompson submachine gun is still being made by the Auto Ordnance Corporation. While the initial production runs didn't exceed several thousand guns, there were hundreds of thousands of them made during World War II. Lots of police agencies still have them in the back corner of the weapons locker. It might be a good idea to take a look at what the Thompson can provide.

For one thing, it offers raw power. Thompsons were .45 ACPs and they have all of the desirable characteristics of



*This MP5 has been fitted with a heavy-duty light. There are lots of times when lots of light mates well with lots of firepower. Usually, that is in the SWAT entry situation, which is extremely dangerous.*





*The MP5 can also be furnished with a sound-suppressed barrel unit. There are some situations that demand this sort of equipment. This is factory original gear. It isn't a cheap screw-on after-market contraption. This works.*

the legendary manstopper. Lots of SWAT officers wisely use .45s as their handguns; why not in the submachine gun as well?

Usually, the Thompson is criticized as being too heavy, but SWAT officers won't likely have to carry them on forced marches. And the oft-repeated bull about the lack of controllability in the gun is just that. Most weapons can be learned and the Thompson is one that is easier than most. Finally, all Thompsons have a little lever that lets you tone them down to semi-automatic fire. It isn't likely that this chapter will cause any great return to the Tommy Gun, but it's worth a comment.

Machine guns of whatever stripe have specific purposes in law enforcement operations. Most of them center around the situation where there's a need for covering fire to get the door-kickers into position to do their thing. And then there are the door-kickers themselves. Some of them would like to have the security that comes from a gun that puts out overwhelming amounts of accurate and controlled fire.

They are the few policemen who *do* need a machine gun.



*...Ah, the Thompson. Eagle-eyed readers will recognize this as the pistol version of the grand old gun, but the contours of the legendary SMG are the same. There are lots of reasons why the first submachine gun might well be all that's really needed by law enforcement agencies.*



## CHAPTER ELEVEN

# THE LONG RIFLE



— *Cop Parlance For The Primary Tool  
Of The Police Sniper, A Precision Shooting Machine.*

**T**HE MUNICH Olympics massacre of September 1972 made us all aware of the fact that there was a real need for highly trained, specially equipped teams within the law enforcement communities of the free world. The public began hearing about groups like the German GSG-9, the French GIGN, the British SAS and our own U.S. Delta team.

On a closer note, large police and federal agencies found the need to develop SWAT and Hostage Rescue Teams (HRT) to handle the increased violence and sophistication

of criminals and home-grown terrorists. An important member of these teams became the sniper or counter-sniper as they also are known. Even smaller police and sheriff's departments, which then could neither afford nor justify the need for a full special response team, saw the need for a trained police marksman to handle situations that required the accurate use of justified force.

With this increased interest in special response teams and counter-sniper units came a new market for some highly specialized weapons and accessories. The arms



industry was quick to meet the demands of these teams. Many agencies were equally as quick to pull out their checkbooks without really understanding the role or requirements of a law enforcement sniper. Other agencies tried to go the cheapest route by purchasing lightweight deer rifles which are not up to the exacting demands of this type of work.

So, before you run out to buy new equipment, let's take a serious look at the role of the sniper and the environment in which he must operate.

The police sniper has two primary roles in a tactical operation:

1) To gain the high ground or best position of advantage, then observe and report all that he sees. The sniper is usually the best source of intelligence information for the command post and assault/rescue team.

2) To stop with *certainty* the dangerous — or potentially dangerous — activity of the suspect. He shoots to kill with the *first* round. The sniper generally will shoot only on the direct orders of the command element.

The law enforcement sniper is required to positively identify his target; contend with possible bystanders, hostages or team members within close proximity to the target; operate under all light and weather conditions; maintain his position for many hours, then make the shot on command — then, based on his training and experience, stand up before a board of inquiry or court of law and justify his actions.



*Ammunition with first-rate accuracy is a necessity for police marksmen. Federal 308M is about as good as you can buy. It has earned a reputation for performance in more than one actual-use situation. Note Sierra bullet.*

To perform the above tasks with a high degree of success the sniper must be equipped with the best available rifle, optical sights and related accessories.

Let us first look at the commercially available weapons systems in the U.S.

*The police sniper may have to set up for extended periods of time. Here author Mark Lonsdale poses with the tools of the trade: Rifle, binoculars, radio, bipod. The patience required can't be photographed.*





## McMILLAN

The McMillan M-82 and M-86 sniper rifles have long been recognized as some of the finest weapons available to the military and law enforcement communities.

Gale McMillan's rifles are the closest thing on the commercial market to the U.S. Marine Corps' M40A1. Built on either the McMillan or Remington 700 actions, these weapons come complete with the McMillan fiberglass stock, McMillan twenty-four-inch, 1-in-12 twist stainless steel barrel, the Ultra 10x-M1 scope, McMillan trigger, cleaning gear and hard case.

The accuracy of these rifles is guaranteed to be less than 0.5 MOA from the factory, with good quality ammunition. Other factory options include rails, handstops, bipods, various stock colors or 300 Win. mag. chambering. (Standard caliber is .308 Win.)

*McMillan recommends the use of this Federal ammo in their rifles. Handloading match shooters have long used the Sierra 168-grain boat tail bullet, now Federal does.*



*One of the best rifles available is the McMillan. This superb shooting machine uses an action and barrel made by the company, as well as a reinforced fiberglass stock.*



*Close-up details of the McMillan. Note that the stock surface that will be grasped is roughened. The scope is a Leupold Ultra 10x M1. It shoots below a half-minute.*

## HECKLER & KOCH PSG-1

For those in search of fast follow-up shot capability, H&K's PSG-1 is undoubtedly the ultimate semi-automatic sniper system.



*The Heckler & Koch PSG-1 is billed as more than a rifle. It is sort of a shooting system, with fast semi-automatic capability. Most of all, it's highly accurate.*





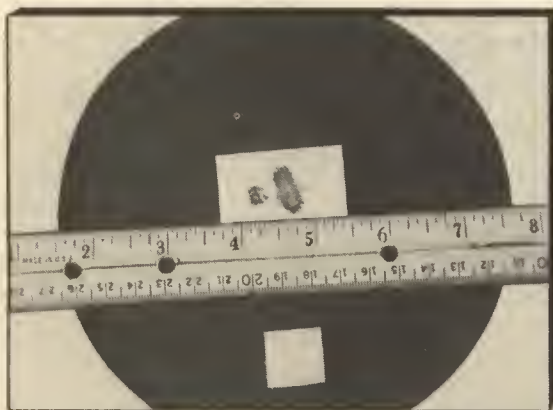
*A system of this sort doesn't come cheap, but if there is no limit to the budget, it can be a good choice. The PSG-1 is accurate, reliable, and durable at six grand.*

*The receiver area of the PSG-1 shows a resemblance to the G-3 series of rifles. The standard scope, as seen in this photo, is a Hensoldt 6x42 bullet drop compensator.*



The PSG-1 is an optional five- or twenty-round weapon with a heavy barrel, fully adjustable stock, forend rail, tripod, stippled pistol grip and excellent trigger. For optics, the PSG-1 comes standard with the Hensoldt 6x42 bullet drop compensating scope, illuminated reticle and mounts welded directly to the receiver. All of this is delivered in a robust, hard case with sling, manual and accessories.

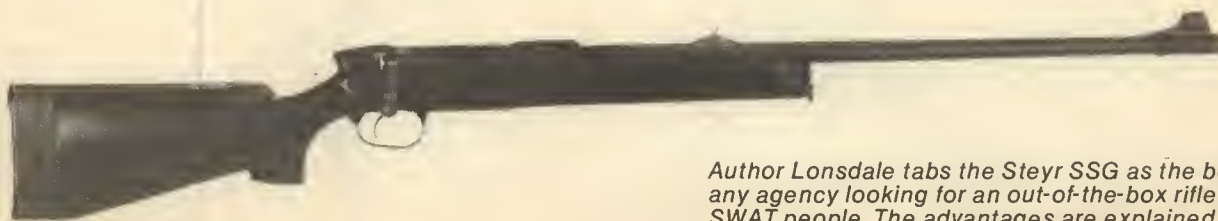
The eighteen-pound weight and \$5000+ price tag may scare some potential buyers away, but this weapon is extremely accurate, a pleasure to shoot and will truly be appreciated by the sniper team that understands the confidence that comes from knowing that there are immediate follow-up shots at their finger tips.



*Left: Look closely. The group measures a little better than one inch, which is good — until you realize that it was fired at three hundred yards — which is absolutely superb.*

### STEYR SSG

The Steyr SSG — especially the newer SSG P-11 — is probably the best out-of-the-box/value-for-money sniper weapon on the market. At around \$800, without the scope, the P-11 is well within the realistic price range for a small agency in need of a new sniper weapon.



*Author Lonsdale tabs the Steyr SSG as the best bet for any agency looking for an out-of-the-box rifle for their SWAT people. The advantages are explained in the text.*



*Another Heckler & Koch, this one for situations where firepower is more important than gilt-edge accuracy. The rifle is the G2 SG-1, with twenty-round magazine.*

The P-11 has all the accessories needed for good shooting: heavy barrel, synthetic stock, adjustable stock length, forend rail, handstop, five- or ten-round rotary magazines, a strong action, matte black finish and it's available in .308 Win., or .243 Win.

For optics, the factory scope is the Kahles 6x ZF84, complete with quick-detachable mounts. Rings are available to fit any commercially available scope if the customer chooses.

One word of warning: this rifle is available with either a single trigger or double set triggers. It is strongly recommended that any law enforcement agency order the single trigger system. The double trigger system, when set, is just too light for safe sniper deployment and one more thing that could go wrong at the worst time. Remember the KISS Principle: Keep It Simple, Stupid.

#### **HECKLER & KOCH G2SG-1**

The G2SG-1 is a good selection where firepower is more critical than super accuracy. Equipped with a 1.5x-

6x scope, twenty-round magazine and factory bipod, it is a versatile unit, but will not shoot the one-inch group that most agencies should demand from their sniper weapons systems.

Both the Los Angeles Police Department and Los Angeles sheriffs have this rifle, but they also maintain their heavy barrel Remington 700BDLs in their inventory of SWAT/SEB weapons.

#### **REMINGTON 700BDL VARMINT**

The heavy barrel 700 is probably the most common police sniper weapon in use today. It has tremendous potential as an excellent sniper rifle, but not as it arrives new in the box. The action is good, but the barrel and stock are too shiny to be taken on an operation as is.

Parkerize or Electofilm the barrel and action, sand down and oil or paint the stock, add a rubber recoil pad, a sling and a good scope, like the Ultra 10x or Leupold 3.5-10x, and it will only leave two more things to do.

Have the barrel well floated in the forend channel to remove any contact points, then bed the action into the stock with Brownell's Acraglas or Micro-Bed.

There are many other exotic sniper weapons that one will read about in various publications, but so few of them are being used in the U.S. by sniper teams that there is insufficient feedback for a fair appraisal of their tactical performance.



*A plain varmint rifle can often serve. Here's a 700BDL Remington Varmint. A .243, this one will shoot with the best of them. It's posed on the Heckler & Koch tripod.*





## CUSTOM RIFLE WORK

If one takes the time to study the FBI statistics relating to law enforcement-involved sniper incidents in the U.S. to date, one may come to the conclusion that there may be a cheaper approach to the subject of sniper weapons.

The rifle and scope should be suitable for close- to medium-range shooting at forty to 150 yards (not the 1000+ yards demanded by the military), be accurate at these distances (1 MOA), be of sufficient caliber to immediately stop the suspect (.308 Win.) and not be adversely affected by penetration through glass windows. There are a number of reasons that .308 Win. is the most popular, but the most important is that it is the only caliber that is commercially available in Match Grade quality. To date, the Federal 168-grain BTHP Match ammo is the best option for any sniper team in the U.S.

Many agencies already have some form of bolt-action rifle in their armories. These can be rebarreled and re-worked to perform as well as any commercially-made sniper weapon.

*A completely custom rifle, this one was built by Fiber-Pro of San Diego, using a Winchester Model 70 action and a Hart heavy stainless steel barrel with 1:11 twist.*

The best actions to begin with are the Remington 700, the Sako and the Winchester 70. A quality heavy barrel is the single most important factor in building an accurate rifle. Hart, Bill Wiseman and Douglas all make a fine barrel. The FBI and many other units favor the Hart 1-in-12 twist, but the accuracy from a Bill Wiseman barrel is extremely impressive.

By simply having a competent gunsmith float and bed this barreled action back into the stock and adding a good scope, you probably will come up with an excellent shooter.

A good fiberglass stock by Fiber-Pro or McMillan also helps in upgrading an old rifle. Fiber-Pro of San Diego will do the bedding, add crinkle finish, install a forend rail, add a recoil pad and sling swivels to complete the package.

We have had many fine sniper rifles built in this manner and all shoot as well, if not better, than any \$2000 or \$3000 factory rifle. But, if you have the budget and do not wish to wait on a gunsmith, there are some excellent sniper rifles out there.



*Custom details improve the shootability of any rifle. A look at the bipod and forend handstop assembly on the McMillan rifle. McMillans are popular with U.S. military.*



*The ubiquitous M16/AR-15 has uses in the police sniper business. This one has been fitted with a Litton night scope and the result is a unique tool for special needs.*

## SECONDARY SNIPER WEAPONS

The secondary sniper weapon is generally a scoped, semi-automatic assault rifle to be used for situations that do not require the one-shot precision of the heavier bolt-action primary weapon. There are several options available in both .223 and .308.

### HECKER & KOCH 91

The 91 is the best-value-for-money .308 assault rifle that would fit the bill as a sniper support weapon. A factory bipod, sling, 4x detachable scope, and twenty-round magazines make up the accessories of this accurate system. The only fault one will find with most 91s is that the trigger pull is a little too heavy. This can be remedied by a good gunsmith.

### HECKLER & KOCH 93

If .223 (5.56mm) is your choice, the 93 comes with all the same factory options as its big brother, the 91. Con-

siderably lighter and faster in close quarters, the 93 still possesses all the accuracy of the 91.

### M16/AR-15-A2

With its heavier barrel and equipped with a good scope, the A2 also fits the bill as an accurate secondary weapon. Other weapons that also fall into this class are the FN/FAL, Springfield's M1A and SAR-48, Ruger's Mini-14 and Galil's AR.

One weapon worth particular note for close-in sniping is the H&K 94 in its SG-1 Marksman configuration.

This is a fixed-stock 94 with raised cheekpiece, Harris bipod, 6x Leupold scope and a matte black finish. The 9mm caliber would be useful where over-penetration would be a strong consideration.

Surprisingly, this weapon is extremely accurate out to one hundred yards, which would be the absolute limit for the employment of this sniping system.

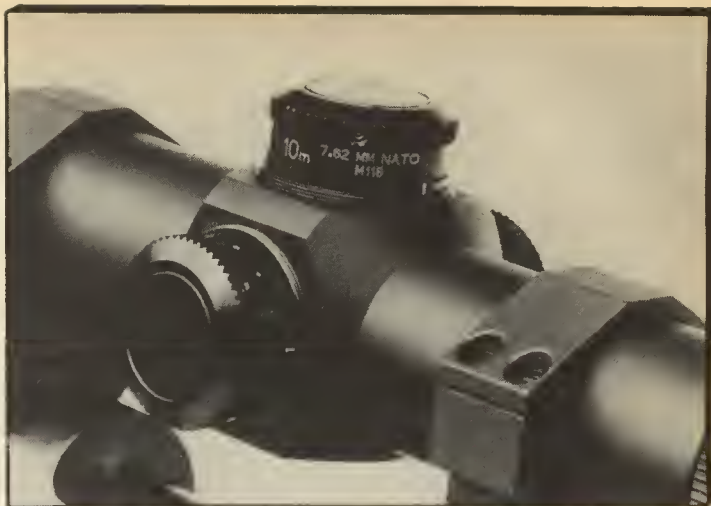
Some counter-terrorists units have even gone to the use

*Another special tool is the Heckler & Koch 94 SG-1 in 9mmP. Sometimes, the tactical situation will require a single, well-placed shot at relatively close range. This may be the best tool for the job — an accurate carbine.*





*Good optics will have a variety of adjustments for the demands of sniping. This Leupold Ultra 10x M-1 has a knob to adjust focus, quarter-minute clicks for windage and elevation. For all practical purposes, the scope is a part of the rifle. If it's removed, then you re-zero.*



of scoped revolvers and semi-automatic handguns for specialized applications.

### SCOPES

A good optical sight is a critical part of the sniper weapons system; it is also the most prone to damage.

The scope should be a strong, high-quality unit with ample field of view, good magnification for target identification and light gathering. It should not be affected by recoil, weather or reasonably rough handling.

Fixed power scopes are simpler, stronger, less versatile but more than adequate for police sniper work. The Leupold Ultra series scopes are probably the best made sniper scopes in the United States.

The Ultra 10x-M1 is now being widely used by both military and law enforcement snipers. It is a fixed ten-power scope with one-quarter minute-of-angle click adjustments for both windage and elevation. It also comes equipped with a focus adjustment on the left side of its 30mm tube. All Ultras are of machined aluminum with a wall thickness of 0.100-inch, waterproofed and matte finished.

The 10x-M2 is available to law enforcement and military only with a rangefinding reticle (stadia lines) which

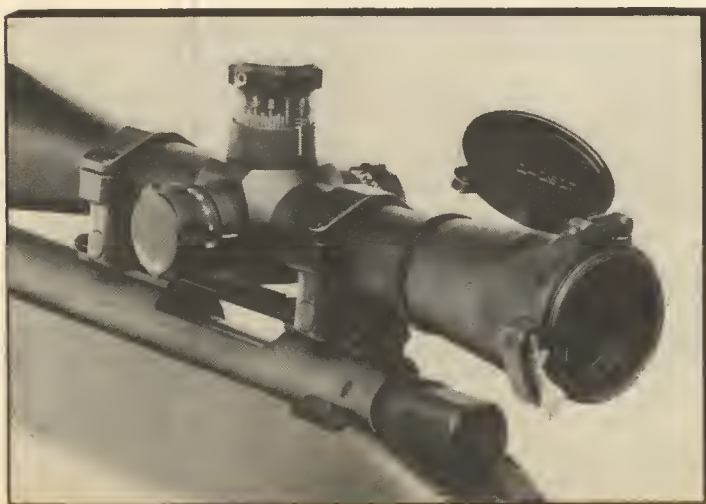
operate on the width of a man's shoulders at the specific range indicated.

The 10x-M3 comes with a 0- to 1000-meter elevation dial calibrated for military 7.62mm ammunition. This dial can be changed for one calibrated for .300 Winchester magnum, for those that prefer this caliber for long-range application.

For those who feel 10x is too powerful for close-in police application, the 6x Kahles ZF84 would be an excellent alternative. This scope has long been a favorite of Commonwealth military and counter-terrorist units and has an added light-gathering quality for use in low-light situations.

The variable-power scope has many advantages for the SWAT/HRT sniper. The high-powered settings can be used for target identification, intelligence gathering and long-range shooting, while the lower powers will afford better light gathering and a wider field of view for close-in shots. Keep in mind that the average police sniper range is in the fifty- to one hundred-yard range with seventy a good average.

An adjustable objective (AO) or focus adjustment can be a real help on those close-in shots where other scopes may be too blurred to risk the shot.



*Another Leupold, the Ultra 10x M-3 has a removable element matched to the ammo to be fired. This one is for 7.62mm NATO, but it can be replaced with a like unit for the other sniper round — .300 Winchester mag.*



The French GIGN utilize a 2.5x-10x Zeiss and there are several excellent scopes made in the U.S.; Leupold has a 3x-9x and a 3.5x-10x, both with a factory matte finish. Most other one-inch tube scopes come with a gloss finish, but can be painted. The duplex or mil/dot reticle has long been considered the optimum for sighting.

Along with the scope, be sure to obtain a set of rugged mounts and rings. Be aware that scopes can have one-inch, 26mm or 30mm tubes and must have the corresponding rings for solid mounting. A weapon with movement in the scope mounts never will stay at true zero, so check and learn to recognize this potential source of error.

A little Loctite will go a long way toward improving the security of mounting screws and bolts.

## NIGHT SCOPES

For a major state, federal or municipal special response team, night vision capability is essential. The Litton M-845 is one of the best units available, but many police chiefs will cringe at the \$5000 price tag.

Do not think that this night scope can be taken off and put on at will, when required, and still maintain perfect zero. It is strongly recommended that the agency invest in an additional weapon to be permanently setup for night shooting.

On that note, any time a scope is removed from the weapons system and replaced, the system should be taken to the range and re-zeroed.

*Sniping has its origins in the military and is still a part of military tactics. This French soldier is using an issue sniper rifle. They are good, but only rarely up to the demands imposed by circumstances of typical SWAT use.*

*The Litton night sight. Mounted on an AR-15, this unit enables the police sniper to literally shoot in darkness.*





## SUPPRESSORS

The sonic suppressor or silencer can be a useful tool for some teams, but is not generally essential for the smaller agencies. Like the night vision device, the suppressor should not be removed and replaced on the weapon without careful realignment with an alignment rod.

There are several junk suppressors on the market, so be sure to purchase a reputable unit like Ciener, Qual-a-tec or La France. Even better is to have them build the complete weapon and keep it set up permanently for covert sniping.

Now that you have selected your sniper weapons system, several additional items will greatly improve your performance in both training and on operations.

## SHOOTING JACKET

A padded jacket designed specifically for shooting is an essential part of the sniper's equipment. It will allow the sniper to maintain a comfortable shooting position for the long periods that he will be required to stay on target. The padded elbows and shoulder prevent stock movement or discomfort from rough terrain.

The SWAT/Sniper jacket made by Jim Hill of Creedmore Armory is one of the best we have tested. Other competition jackets have proved too restrictive for the movement required of a sniper as he moves into position.

## SHOOTING MAT

A good shooting mat by Creedmore or Freeland's will be

*Author Lonsdale in one of the specially designed SWAT shooting jackets built by the Creedmore Armory. Style of the garment was determined by international shooter Jim Hill, who makes a complete line of first-rate gear for both SWAT shooters and competitive marksmen alike.*

*The Litton night vision sight is an amazing piece of gear. Mounted on an AR-15, the sight lets the shooter do some surprising things. This group measures a little more than an inch and that's pretty good with an AR-15. It becomes phenomenal when you consider that it was fired at a full one hundred yards in complete darkness. Sight costs \$5200.*



a useful shooting aid when one is required to deploy on a rough surface or hot roof. The sniper must be comfortable and relaxed if he is to perform well under the stress of a barricade/hostage situation.

### SLING AND GLOVE

The correct use of the shooting sling is being re-emphasized in sniper training these days. The sling can add considerably to the accuracy of the sniper, while giving more flexibility and versatility than a bipod or tripod.

Select a quality leather, adjustable sling 1¼ inches in width. Avoid narrow synthetic slings that may stretch or cut off blood circulation in the shooter's arm. Bianchi, Freeland's, Creedmore and Bucheimer all make excellent

slings for competitive shooters and snipers.

A thick leather glove on the weak hand will allow the shooter to take a rest on concrete walls or wooden posts without risk of splinters or abrasion.

### BIPODS AND SANDBAGS

We have found our best positions and most accurate shooting is achieved by the use of a sandbag rest, but these are heavy and cumbersome on an operation, unless one has ample time to set up.

Protektor Model makes the best custom leather sandbags available and, filled with crushed walnuts instead of sand, they are easy to carry. The alternative is a Harris Bipod, and it is not a bad alternative at all. Most weapons

*Author Lonsdale demonstrating the equipment commonly used by a well-equipped police marksman. The rifle is one of the super-expensive Heckler & Koch PSG-1s, a semi-automatic .308 capable of repeat shots in virtually the same spot. The accuracy is guaranteed out to as much as three hundred meters. For spotting, the author is using a pair of high-quality binoculars. He maintains contact with his boss via a Motorola portable radio unit. Even the tripod on the H&K is a well-designed, well-crafted unit.*







*For top-notch accuracy and extended barrel life, a sniper rifle must be cleaned carefully and often. A good solvent, such as Shooter's Choice, is used on a tight-fitting patch-tipped jig. The rod should be one piece and as stiff as possible. Also note that a cleaning rod guide is being used to keep the rod centered in the bore. This practice reduces bore wear.*

can be fitted with a bipod and it is a tremendous crutch to a sniper who has not learned sling shooting or must deploy quickly.

#### **BINOCULARS AND SPOTTING SCOPES**

Snipers generally work in two-man teams. While the primary sniper maintains a shoot/ready position, the secondary sniper or observer tries to maintain visual contact with the suspect through a good set of binoculars or a powerful spotting scope. The advantage of the spotting scope is that it is tripod-mounted and allows hands-free observation.

Redfield, Leupold, Bushnell all make excellent spotting scopes in the 20x-60x range. A 20x seems adequate for most urban use, but a variable scope may be nice to have on the rifle range.

#### **CASES**

When transporting a precision sniper weapon in the back of a SWAT truck or when flying interstate, it is essential that the weapon be well padded and stowed in a rigid case.

The Pelican case, made of high-density plastics, is both water- and dust-proof and has proven itself an excellent product. There are also several companies making finely engineering aluminum cases that will withstand any amount of rough handling.

Even when it is in a solid case, try to treat your weapon with care and avoid dropping or throwing it. Keep the case locked so unauthorized fingers do not get into the case and play with the sight settings, etc.

#### **CLEANING GEAR**

The barrel life of a quality weapon is related directly to the care and cleaning it receives. A barrel should maintain

good accuracy for up to 15,000 rounds, if properly cared for, but as few as 3000 if abused. Improper cleaning can be more detrimental to accuracy than excessive use.

Use a one-piece steel cleaning rod (Rig, Wagner, Pachmayr) or a plastic-coated one like those from Parker-Hale. Clean only from the action/chamber end of the barrel and use a close-fitting rod guide.

Shooter's Choice has proved to be an excellent solvent for removing carbon and metal fouling build-up. After swabbing the bore with Shooter's Choice bore cleaner, run dry patches through the bore until they come out clean.

There are two catalogs that a sniper or police procurement officer should definitely send for:

Freeland's  
3737 14th Avenue  
Rock Island, IL 61201

Creedmore Armory  
P.O. Box 1489  
Oceanside, CA 92054

Once an agency has invested \$1500 to \$3000 per sniper for weapons and equipment, the agency then should ensure that the selected individuals get the training, time and ammunition to reach and maintain a high level of expertise. Agency snipers should have their weapons permanently assigned to them so that they are always available for training or operations.

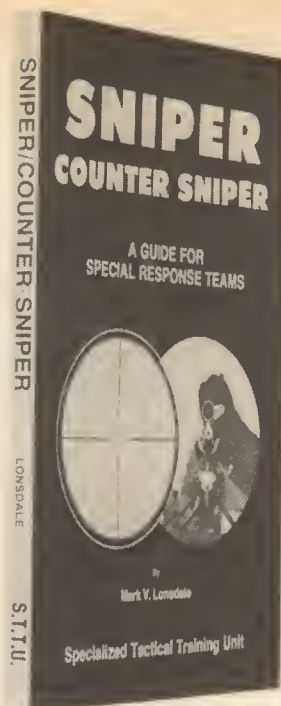
The snipers should train at least every two weeks, with and without the rest of the special response team. An agency that does not ensure that their snipers are equipped with quality weapons systems and practice on a regular basis could find itself on the wrong end of a lawsuit for negligence.

The FBI is the primary source of training for police snipers, but not all agencies can make the time to get their people there regularly. The Specialized Tactical Training Unit is the only private training organization we know of that is actively involved in SWAT/sniper training in the U.S. today.

Law enforcement and military units also participate regularly in the periodic Sniper Matches hosted by STTU, so that they can evaluate their own levels of expertise against fellow snipers from other agencies.

Agencies interested in training, attending the sniper matches or just in search of advice can contact STTU at P.O. Box 491261, Los Angeles, CA 90049 — Mark Lonsdale

*Lonsdale is currently working as a security consultant as well as running STTU (Special Tactical Training Unit). This group specializes in training police marksman, as well as developing the tactics and techniques used by them. He travels frequently in order to stay abreast of current data.*



*The slim paperback book contains a wealth of data on the subject of police sniping and related matters. Distribution of the book is somewhat restricted, according to Lonsdale.*

#### WEAPONS

Heckler & Koch, Inc.  
14601 Lee Road  
Chantilly, VA 22021

G. McMillan & Co.  
21421 North 14th Avenue  
Suite B  
Phoenix, AZ 85027

Springfield Armory  
420 West Main St.  
Geneseo, IL 61254

Remington Arms Co.  
1007 Market St.  
Wilmington, DE 19898

Sturm, Ruger & Co.  
Lacey Place  
Southport, CT 06490

Steyr Daimler Puch of America  
Gun South, Inc.  
Box 6607  
7605 Eastwood Mall  
Birmingham, AL 35210

Stoeger Industries (Sako)  
55 Ruta Court  
S. Hackensack, NJ 07606

Bill Wiseman  
P.O. Box 3427  
Bryan, TX 77805



## SCOPES & MOUNTS

Buehler Scope Mounts  
17 Orinda Hwy.  
Orinda, CA 94563

Burris Co., Inc.  
331 E. 8th St.  
Box 1747  
Greeley, CO 80631

Leupold & Stevens, Inc.  
P.O. Box 688  
Beaverton, OR 97075

Redfield  
5800 E. Jewell Avenue  
Denver, CO 80224

John Unertl Optical  
3551-5 East Street  
Pittsburg, PA 15214

Kahles of America  
Main Street  
Margaretville, NY 12455

Carl Zeiss, Inc.  
Box 2010  
1015 Commerce Street  
St. Petersburg, VA 23803

Millett Industries  
16131 Gothard Street  
Huntington Beach, CA 92647

## BARRELS

Douglas Barrels, Inc.  
5504 Big Tyler Rd.  
Charleston, WV 25313

Shilen Rifles  
205 Metro Park Blvd.  
Ennis, TX 75119

Hart Rifle Barrels  
RD #2  
Lafayette, NY 13084

McMillan Barrels  
P.O. Box 3427  
Bryan, Texas 77805

## ACCESSORIES

Brownells, Inc.  
Route 2, Box 1  
Montezuma, IA 50171

Freelands  
3737 14th Avenue  
Rock Island, IL 61201

Pachmayr Gun Works  
1220 S. Grand Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90015

## TRIGGERS

Timney Mfg. Inc.  
3106 West Thomas Rd.  
Suite 1104  
Phoenix, AZ 85017

## CHRONOGRAPHS

Oehler Research Inc.  
P.O. Box 9135-A  
Austin, TX 78766

## LEATHER

Davis Leather Co.  
3930 Valley Blvd.  
Unit F  
Walnut, CA 91789

Bianchi Gunleather  
100 Calle Cortez  
Temecula, CA 92390

JM Bucheimer (Slings)  
P.O. Box 280  
Frederick, MD 21701

## RELOADING

Dillon Precision  
7442 E. Butnerus Dr.  
Scottsdale, AZ 85260

## NIGHT VISION

Litton  
1215 South 52nd. St.  
Tempe, AZ 85281

Aerolog Industries Inc.  
17029 Devonshire St.  
Suite 151  
Northridge, CA 91325

## TARGET SYSTEMS

ATS (Duelatron)  
12 Skillman Lane  
St. Paul, MN 55101

Caswell Equipment Co., Inc.  
1221 Marshall St.  
Minneapolis, MN 55413

## SUPPRESSORS

La France Specialties  
San Diego, CA

Jonathan Ciener  
6850 Riveredge Dr.  
Titusville, FL 32780

## TRAINING

FBI  
11000 Wilshire Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90024

STTU  
P.O. Box 491261  
Los Angeles, CA 90049

NRA  
1600 Rhode Island Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20036

## SHOOTING JACKETS

Creedmore Armory  
P.O. Box 1489  
Oceanside, CA 92054

## RUST PROOFING

Electofilm Inc.  
27727 Avenue Scott  
Valencia, CA 91355

## STOCKS

Brown Precision  
Box 270  
7786 Molinos Ave.  
Los Molinos, CA 96055

Fiber-Pro  
3636 California St.  
San Diego, CA 92101

G. McMillan & Co.  
21421 North 14th Ave.  
Suite B  
Phoenix, AZ 85027

## CUSTOM HANDGUNS

James Clark  
Route 2, Box 22A  
Keithville, LA 71047

## AMMUNITION

Federal Cartridge Co.  
2700 Foshay Tower  
Minneapolis, MN 55402

Sierra Bullet Co.  
10532 S. Painter Ave.  
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670

Winchester Group  
Shamrock St.  
East Alton, IL 62024

## CASES

Pelican Cases  
(213) 328-9910





## CHAPTER TWELVE

# SNIPING- COP STYLE



### *These Cops Have Enormous Responsibility: Selecting, Training and Using The Police Sniper*

**A**LTHOUGH THE USE of police snipers is relatively new in the field of law enforcement, only having come to the forefront in the past two decades, sniping as an art is not a new application for the rifle as a weapon.

Sniping with the "Long Gun" goes back in history for as long as the rifle itself. The longest verified sniper kill was reported to have occurred during the Civil War when a general was shot and killed from a distance of one mile. The sniper, who was a ballistics expert, and was quite familiar with his weapon and ammunition, observed the general from afar with a telescope. Keeping track of the general's activities, he noticed that the general liked to shave at the same time every morning.

A patient individual, the sniper waited for ideal shooting conditions. He established a benchrest for his rifle by mounting it on the top of a sturdy table. The weapon was equipped with a telescopic sight which was as long as the rifle barrel. His patience finally paid off when he awoke one morning to a clear day with no wind blowing, a perfect shooting day. He loaded his rifle, sighted in on his target, and fired. The general, who was following his normal morning routine, got to the second stroke of his razor, just before the fatal shot struck, ending his life.

In each war since the Civil War, the art of sniping has become more effective, as weapons and ammunition have improved. By the close of World War I, the so-called War to End All Wars, the Springfield '03, the service rifle of the era, was recording many kills over 1000 yards. In subsequent wars, the technology and weapons design of the time, when placed in the hands of a capable marksman, proved to be just as effective. The psychological effect of a sniper was always devastating and disruptive to enemy operations.

*Webster's New World Dictionary* defines a sniper as, "a sharpshooter concealed to harass the enemy by picking off individual members usually at long range with a telescopic-sighted rifle." The *New Collegiate* version goes to say that, "Sniping is to shoot at exposed individuals of an enemy's forces when not in action from a concealed point of vantage." In "real world" terms the United States Marine Corps defines the mission of the Marine sniper as, "supporting combat operations by delivering precision fire on selected targets from concealed positions."

By any definition you choose to apply, a sniper is a highly trained, skilled rifleman who can stealthily move to a concealed position, (remaining unseen while moving to it), and once there, is capable of identifying a target, ob-





*At the heart of the matter, the skills of the rifleman are not much different than the skills of a good hunter. Left: Frank Nagle of the Huntington Beach Police Dept. has taken up a prone position in some brush adjacent to the city dump. Below: moving to a new position, Nagle proceeds cautiously without being detected by the suspect.*

serving and reporting its activities and, when and if required, neutralize it with one shot.

By now you probably are asking yourself what all this has to do with an officer of the law or more specifically, a chapter in a book on law enforcement which should be primarily concerned with the protection of life and property in a peace-loving society. Especially since the last time you checked, your local police department wasn't at war with the citizens of the community and didn't have a need to snipe at them from covered positions. Or do they?

No, not really! But the point is that most modern police agencies and probably the one in your hometown — do have the capability to employ capable police marksmen or snipers, if the need arises. Why is this? Well, I'm sure you've probably read, at some time or other in the past, the newspapers. And if you have, you've no doubt read a story or two about some incident wherein a criminal or deranged person has undertaken to participate in some form of violent criminal act. That act may have run the gamut from armed robbery to extortion or could have been similar to the most recent incident which involved an armed individual's blood-letting rampage in a Southern California fast food restaurant. Add the ever present and increasing incidences of violent terrorist-related activities that have been on the increase over the past two decades and you have situations or potential situations that were beyond the normal capability of the average police agency.

In the past, the average beat cop — when faced with situations like these, where superior firepower and methodically planned, coordinated criminal acts were in progress — came up on the short end of the stick. Criminals of



this caliber often were better equipped and, in the case of a terrorist, better trained for survival than the officer sworn by society to uphold the law. This form of criminal activity required a more sophisticated level of police response. This requirement, in turn, necessitated the development of special police units trained in the use of tactics and weapons suited for the job. Out of this necessity, the SWAT team came into existence.

Initially organized and trained along military lines, these specialized units — SWAT teams, as they are commonly called — provided the police department with a means of handling these volatile and extremely dangerous situations. The military structuring of the team allowed them the command and control necessary for tactical maneuverability. Included in this organization was the use of snipers for a long-range advantage and to provide a counter-sniping capability. The acronym, SWAT, stands for Special Weapons and Tactics.

SWAT teams are, out of necessity and budgetary restraints, organized and manned to meet the needs of a particular jurisdiction. Larger departments may have full-time teams, assigning their officers to SWAT as their regular, full-time job. This provides the agency with a quicker response time to emergency situations. Medium- or small-



*Most of the time, the sniper will shoot from the prone position and use a bipod. But there are times when he might have to shoot quickly from the offhand position. This is a fundamental skill of all competent riflemen.*





*Police snipers don't act on their own. In the photo to the left, you can see one of the more common ways of carrying a small radio. It fits into a pouch on the back of the vest. The earpiece lets Nagle maintain his position and his aim while listening to the radio for the commander's order to...*

*...SHOOT! When the situation gets to the point that no other action will work, the sniper may be given the command to fire. Marksmanship and a good rifle take over. No room here for error. One shot is enough.*



size departments normally assign their officers to a team as an additional duty. This often delays response time slightly. Some agencies find it economically efficient to contract with the local sheriff for SWAT services. But SWAT teams of all sizes, and in all jurisdictions, no matter how they may be organized, have a need for and employ, as part of their tactical response capability, a trained police marksman or sniper.

Much of what these police units initially learned was taught to them by the military or adapted by them from the previous military experience of its members. The training, doctrine and operational procedure learned from the military, although basically sound, needed to be refined to suit the civilian environment. Such refinement came about through practical day-to-day operational experience and the innovative thinking of some police administrators.

What is the difference between a military sniper and his civilian counterpart? Well, the difference lies basically in the mission and the way each goes about it. The military sniper will be assigned normally to work a specific area within the unit's Tactical Area of Responsibility (TAOR). Here he may be free to identify and engage targets of military value, i.e., enemy officers, forward observers or targets of opportunity. He often will be called upon to reach out and touch the enemy anywhere from five hun-

dred to 1000 yards. Once he fires, he must remain undetected, so he may fire again or escape safely to shoot another day. In comparison, a police sniper normally is given his target assignment or an area of observation in support of a larger SWAT operation. He is closely controlled and, once placed in position, he remains there to observe and report his observations to the SWAT commander. He remains in his position until he is directed to move. If the situation can be resolved without the use of a shot, the SWAT sniper has done his job, possibly just as well as if he had to fire. Due to the geographical layout of most urban areas, a police sniper normally is not required to shoot in excess of three hundred yards; more often than not, he will be required to engage targets well under this range. His mission, as opposed to the military sniper, is more to control a specific area or eliminate a specified target. Once he does fire and registers a hit, he normally will remain in a covered position to protect his assigned area or engage other targets as directed.

Although the mission of the military sniper varies somewhat from that of the police sniper, the successful accomplishment of both of their missions depends heavily on an ability to shoot and, above all, to hit what they shoot at. This shooting ability requires constant training in order to keep it up to the level demanded by the job.



## SNIPER SELECTION

How does someone become a police sniper? Well, don't get all fired up and run right out to apply for the position at your local police department. It doesn't work that way! There is a lot more involved than just filling out an application.

First, you'll have to apply and be accepted for a position

*In the sequence of photos on this and subsequent pages, we'll watch a professional police officer assigned to a SWAT sniper mission get ready for the job. Dennis Scott is an officer with the Santa Ana Police Department and he has had to do this on more than a few occasions.*



*Scott puts on a heavy armored vest over a lightweight black jersey. Black clothing is not an affectation — it enables him to blend into the shadows on rooftops and corners. In this photo, Scott is getting...*



as a police officer. This involves going through a rigorous testing and screening process set up to select only the most qualified candidates for the position. Once you have completed this and passed an extensive background investigation, the next step is to attend the hiring agency's training academy, which can last from fifteen to eighteen weeks. After successfully being graduated from the academy, you'll probably spend a few months or possibly a year on probation. This period, depending upon what type of agency you hired on with, could be spent as a jailor in the county jail or on the road under the close supervision of a seasoned training officer. This is your on-the-job-training phase and most agencies feel it's quite important toward your future attitude and development as a police officer.

When this is over, you'll need to spend a few years on the street learning the ropes and gaining the experience necessary to be successful as a police officer. If, after all this, you're still interested in the job and a position opens up on the SWAT team, you probably will be afforded the opportunity to apply. However, even if you're selected for the team, it doesn't mean that you are going to be assigned as the team's sniper right off the bat.

Most departmental SWAT selection procedures begin with passing a rigorous physical fitness test designed to test endurance and stamina. After passing the fitness test, there probably will be an oral interview with those responsible for selection. Consideration for selection to the team at this point usually is based on the officer's past record of demonstrated and proven ability to do good police work, plus the officer's attitude, professionalism and how well he gets along with others.

*...set to fasten the vest down around his torso. The straps are fitted with generous amounts of Velcro. The vest itself is one made primarily of Kevlar. A miraculous woven nylon, it's the heart of most vests.*



If over his past years of service as a police officer, one has shown an interest in what the team does and has demonstrated those qualities desired in a team member, it is not guaranteed that he will be assigned as the team sniper. Those who do the job assignments for the team probably will be looking for a few other things before they decide to give you a "shot," so to speak, as the team's sniper. They will want to see how you work out as a team member first and probably will place you on a probationary period. After this, you may be assigned as the spotter for the sniper and be in training for the sniper position.

A sniper must be physically fit in order to withstand the great physical effort often required when maneuvering to a position. To move fast, carrying his weapon and the large

*Heavy elbow pads go on next. Scott laughingly told us what he went through before he learned to use these: "If you have to lie in position on a pea-gravel roof for eight hours, you'd ransom your wife for a set." And it has happened that snipers have had to stay in position for some long sessions of waiting. Any comfort helps.*



*For the same reason, Scott uses the same type of pad on his knees. The trunk of his patrol car is fitted out with an assortment of equipment that is necessary to work in a variety of different situations. Not one piece of gear is carried without a good reason for doing so.*



amount of equipment he needs for the job, takes strength and endurance. Good physical condition also will serve him well while in position, as he will be better able to remain alert for longer periods of time. The pre-selection fitness test will give some indications to the current level of fitness, but the desire to maintain that condition also must be a consideration.

Hand in hand with physical fitness, comes the mental toughness required to remain in position and stay alert for long periods of time observing the activities of a potential target, reporting accurate detailed information on its activities. This activity may go on for hours on end with only short breaks between. The sniper must remain mentally tough and alert to keep from slipping into a decreased state of readiness.

Another consideration is the potential sniper's emotional state. Rifle optics of today have the ability to put the sniper up close and personal with his target. Because of this, he must be a steady sort, not inclined to become emotional when he considers the type of target he may have to shoot. He must be mature enough to understand and sort out any moral conflict regarding the taking of a life in order to save others.

Other desirable qualities sought in a potential sniper are more personal in nature, but are just as important. These include uncorrected good vision and he should be a non-smoker. If at all possible, he should not wear glasses or contact lenses. The sniper can't afford to lose or break his glasses while on an operation where replacements are not available. This may be overcome by carrying a second set of glasses, but the risk that both will be destroyed will

*Next comes a gear vest over the armor. It has an assortment of pockets and pouches to hold various equipment. More of the black nylon material, the vest is fitted to Scott in such a way that the considerable weight will be distributed evenly over his torso.*





always be present. Glasses also will reflect light and the glare off the lenses may give away the sniper's position at an inopportune time. Contact lenses could prove to be just as disastrous. If one slips or falls out at the critical point, it could render the sniper incapable of shooting with the required degree of accuracy.

Smoking has lost some of its popularity in the last few years and fewer and fewer folks are pursuing the habit. Smoking can be particularly dangerous to a sniper. The nicotine of a freshly smoked cigarette raises the pulse rate and has a tendency to cloud vision.

Neither of which the sniper can afford to have happen to him while in position. The glow of a burning cigarette during the night or the telltale smoke during the day also could give away the sniper's position, making him less effective and subject to suppressive fire from the target area. A sniper who does not smoke will also have an easier time of it, as he is not craving a smoke during the arduous waiting period often associated with the job.

Previous training could play an important part in selecting a sniper. If the officer has worked as a military sniper and or has attended one of the service sniper schools, he probably will require less training to get him up to the task. If not, he will have to start from the ground up, learning his skills through a combination of on-the-job training and whatever formal training the department can arrange for him. This could be an important consideration in assigning a man as a sniper in a smaller department where the resources are not available to undertake this training.

If he has an interest in hunting and the outdoors, he probably will be better suited to the task. Along with this, an interest in weapons, particularly the rifle, and competitive marksmanship are also important considerations in selection. The more he knows about all aspects of the job, the better off he will be.

The desire to perform the duties of a sniper may be just as important as having the ability and personal traits necessary for the job. He should be a volunteer for the job, not assigned against his will. Those making the selection for the sniper position no doubt will take this into consideration and hopefully no manager is ignorant enough to force a

*Below: Chest pocket contents include gas mini-grenades, compress bandages, band-aids, notebook and pen, radio set earphone and microphone and a mirror for signaling and checking around corners. Usually, there's a candy bar and toilet paper. Scott used them on an actual call several days before we got together for a photo session.*



*Below: This ammunition module snaps onto the front of the vest with a series of heavy snaps. Scott can swap it for another type, depending on the job. They're made for shotgun shells, M16 magazines, gas and flash-bang grenades, or several different combinations of these.*



*Zippering up. The fastener is a heavy-duty zipper, like all of the hardware in his rig. There's no room for any item that's likely to tear, break, or otherwise fail. It all has to work. Note the pocket on the right chest of the vest. Velcro'd shut, it holds several interesting items.*



*There's a special little pocket built into the vest for a Mini-Mag Lite. Notice that the light has been fitted with a grommet to keep it from rolling if placed on a hard surface. It also has a red filter to keep the light from being seen and to preserve Scott's night vision.*





*The pocket on the right rear of the vest will hold the full-sized smoke grenade. The sniper may be in the best spot to throw the grenade which will allow other SWAT team members to maneuver into a position for an entry. A small fixed-blade knife is carried for obvious reasons.*



*If you lie on a roof in the California sun for extended periods of time, dressed in black, in July, you'll come to appreciate why Scott added this to his kit. Water is absolutely necessary in any weather. The GI canteen is kept full at all times and the water is changed often.*



*Below: Nobody enjoys wearing one of these around their leg, but it's the only sensible way to carry a gas mask. Veteran SWAT officers will tell you the advantage of gas in controlling volatile situations. The mask is necessary for the sniper since he might have to shoot through gas.*



man to perform these critical duties against his will.

Once selected as a potential sniper, the first job more than likely will be as a spotter for the current sniper. In this position one probably will be cross-trained to do the sniper's job and gradually sharpen skills and gain valuable experience under his tutelage.

## SNIPER TRAINING

An ongoing process, sniper training encompasses a great many things. Let's take a look at some of the areas of which he must have an intimate working knowledge.

Instrumental to the effectiveness of any long-range marksman — and that's basically what a police sniper is — is the rifle. There is a variety of rifles on the market suitable for use by a sniper and an entire chapter in this book is devoted to the merits of some of them.

Sniper rifles are designed to insure accuracy and are usually of the bolt-action type, although semi-automatic service rifles in accurized condition have proven to be just as adequate for the job. Suffice to say that when it comes to the rifle, whatever make or model it is, the sniper must be thoroughly familiar with its capabilities. This knowledge should include the rifle's telescopic sight.

Proper care of the weapon is basic to this knowledge, as the best equipment in the world is of little use if it malfunctions when the time comes to use it. An experienced sniper, through hands-on training, will develop his own method of caring for his rifle.

Mechanical training with the weapon is vital and should include trouble-shooting in the event that something goes wrong at the critical moment in an operation. Through constant training and practicing with his rifle, he will become intimately familiar with its function.

The zero of the weapon is paramount to the effectiveness of the sniper and he must insure it is correct and frequently tested to be sure it does not change. Continuous training also will help instill confidence in his ability to shoot accurately when the time comes. The sniper can't afford to have anything go wrong at the crucial moment in an operation, as he may be the only means available to alleviate the situation.

Once he is thoroughly familiar with the weapon, he must

*Scott checks the mask before he puts it away. This is the military mask which has the fitting to put in a tube that will allow him to drink from his canteen. Again, it is done to make the long waits bearable under the worst of circumstances. Long sessions with a mask aren't fun.*





understand and be able to apply those principles necessary to do the job effectively. This involves the use of marksmanship principles or the mechanics of making the weapon function and hit the target. To do this, he must be able to estimate range to the target, determine what — if any — effect the existing light and wind will have on the trajectory of his round on its path to the target. The effects of wind and light on the shooter and the weapon and round are things that are best learned and understood by continued practical application at a range.

There are schools available throughout the country and a newly assigned sniper should be sent to one soon after he is assigned the position, regardless of his previous experience. This will help train the inexperienced man and update the older hand in newly developed techniques. It also puts him in contact with other snipers who may be more knowledgeable than he, providing exposure to different training methods.

The FBI conducts such a school and arrangements usually can be made to send an officer through the course by contacting the local field office of the Bureau. This is where prior rifle training comes in handy, as it will allow the officer to gain the maximum benefit from the course.

Police rifle marksmanship training also is available through the National Rifle Association and information on their courses usually is sent to the department's training officer. It also may be obtained by contacting the NRA.

Once an officer has attended a formal school, his training from that point will probably consist of on-the-job training, regularly scheduled practice sessions and routine qualification shooting with his weapon. In-service training may consist of whatever innovative training exercise can be established. Qualification requirements for police snipers will vary from agency to agency and can be accomplished as often as weekly, depending on the availability of assets.

A competent police sniper must have a firm understanding and a working knowledge of all the aspects and principles involved in delivering that one shot on target at the correct time. This ability must be tested constantly and trained so it becomes second nature. An adequate training program should consist of a combination of physical train-

*Scott wears his radio on the left upper chest. Before he heads out for the mission, he checks to be sure that it's working correctly. Communications are essential to the properly executed SWAT operation. The chest pocket is made to exactly fit his brand and model of radio set.*

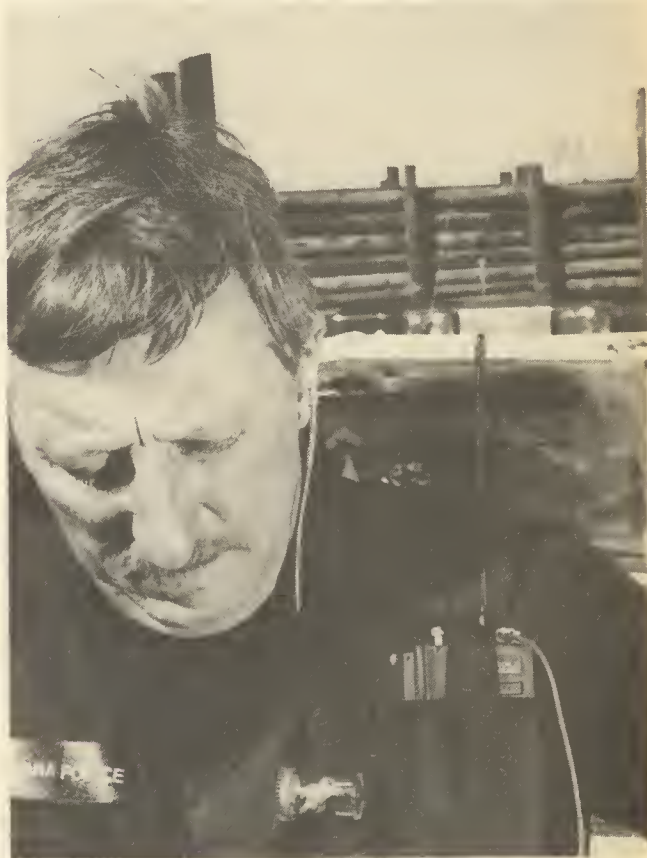


ing, marksmanship training and field craft skills oriented toward the requirements of the job.

## THE SNIPER AT WORK

Now let's take a look at the type of operation in which a sniper is apt to get involved. First, we'll set the scene. It's 4

*With the earphone in place, Scott runs the wire under the vest and around to the radio proper. This keeps the cord from snagging. Note that the radio is secured down with a Velcro strap. The pocket is positioned so that it won't interfere with shooting from the right shoulder.*



*On the left side of the vest in the mid-chest area, the sniper usually carries a handgun. It's for possible use in moving into position. Scott uses a Colt .45 auto because he's intimately familiar with the gun and its operation. This pocket is modular — could be made for other guns.*





*With the gun in place, Scott checks the spare magazine in a pouch near the left kidney area. Training exercises have given him the chance to work with all of this gear. He can come up with the right piece of equipment with a minimum of confusion. Total familiarity is essential.*



*Sometimes, rappelling may be required. Scott's gear bag also includes a rappel seat which fits him with all of the other gear in place. Here, he's tightening up the last adjustment before snapping the hardware in place.*



*Rappelling is often required in urban operations. When buildings are different heights, it's fairly easy to drop down the side of one onto the roof of the next. Rappel methods were developed by mountaineering sportsmen.*



p.m. on a Friday afternoon and an individual has just entered a check-cashing business on Main Street, Yourtown, USA. He presents a note to the cashier, which states that he has a shotgun under his coat and wants the cashier to fill up the brown paper sack he has placed on the counter. He states that, if the cashier sounds an alarm, he will shoot everyone in the place, starting with the cashier. The incident is overheard by the teller next to the victim and he pushes a silent alarm located on the floor by his foot. The cashier takes the bag and fills it with the contents of her cash draw and hands it back.

As the robber turns and walks toward the door, he is joined by an accomplice who was waiting at the door. Just as they are about to exit the business, the first patrol car arrives and is spotted by the robbers. They turn and draw their weapons, firing in the air. They order everyone in the business to assemble in the main waiting area and to lie facedown on the floor. The now hostages consist of nine people: the manager, his assistant, three cashiers and four customers. The robbers take up covered positions where they can observe the approaches to the business and keep the hostages covered.

The first patrol unit arriving at the scene has heard the shots the robbers fired and takes up a covered position where the entrance to the business can be observed and calls for additional units. As the officer finishes his radio call, he receives gunfire from the store which hits his patrol unit, shattering the windshield. As more police units arrive, they establish a perimeter around the business and seal off the area. While attempting to cordon off the area, they receive several bursts of automatic weapons fire from inside the business; luckily nobody is hit. The incident commander keeps his men in covered positions and calls for the assistance of the SWAT team. The SWAT commander is notified and starts to recall his team.

It's 5 p.m. and Officer Smith has just settled down to dinner with his family when the telephone rings and he is notified by the dispatcher of the SWAT call-out. He hangs up the phone and within five minutes has assembled his equipment, which is kept in a constant state of readiness, and is on his way to the station.

*A separate bag holds the climbing rope, the other end of which feeds through a grommet in the bottom of the bag. Heavy gloves are necessary for this phase of the operation. Rappelling gear will be broken out as needed.*





Upon arrival at the station, he suits up and draws his weapon from the armory where it's kept under lock and key with access limited only to him, his sniper/spotter and the SWAT commander. Once his weapon is in his hands, he checks the serial number and compares it with his data book or sniper log to be sure he has the current data he needs for the lot number and type of ammunition he will use for the job. He checks the numerous training targets in his data book for that lot of ammunition to determine what, if any, effect it had in his weapon the last time he fired it and under what light conditions he used it.

The weapon is given a safety and mechanical function check to be sure it's in operable condition. He then re-checks his equipment to be sure he has his weapon bipod, small sandbags and shooting mat that will assist in establishing a good shooting position. He checks that he has his shooting glasses, used for protection and as shade from the sun, knee and elbow pads to help on rough shooting surfaces and myriad other things from water to food, in case it's a prolonged operation.

By the time he is finished this check of his gear, his spotter, Officer Jones, has arrived and together they check over the additional equipment required to support their efforts. About the time they finish their check, the rest of the team has been mustered and, completing the check of their gear, are ready to be briefed.

The SWAT team commander assembles the team for a head count to be sure he has all positions covered. He briefs the team on the information he has and they saddle up and depart.

Upon arrival at the robbery scene, the SWAT commander stages his team and is briefed by the on-scene incident commander and, if time permits, he and his team leaders reconnoiter the area in an effort to determine the best positions to place his men. This accomplished, the team is briefed and areas of responsibility are assigned, including blocking positions and possible sniper locations. The situation has reached a critical stage and Smith and Jones have been instructed to establish a firing position across the street from the business as fast as possible. They move out rapidly, carrying weapons and equipment. They approach

*Scott pulls his hood into place before moving out. The hood isn't for show. There are lots of good reasons for wearing it, not the least of which is camouflage. If the gas is used, it will protect exposed skin on the neck. In cold rainy weather, it will help keep him warm and dry.*



*This is a police operation and all police work will need a report. Scott opens a log with the day, time and other pertinent data. In darkness, the mini-flashlight will be positioned as shown. The red filter is on the flashlight.*



*Snipers, like competitive marksmen, keep good records. The data book contains information on the performance of each lot of ammunition. Scott will check to be sure he has the right lot for the "dope" on his scope sight.*



*Snipers work as a team with a spotter as discussed in the text. The spotter will carry a lighter rifle and the spotting scope tripod and rangefinder as seen here. The entire kit fits into a protective metal container.*





*As the situation dictates, some of this equipment may be used. Sweater, ponchos, watch cap, L-shaped military light, more ammo, gear bag and sweatshirts all may be needed. It's better to have it and not need it than need it and not have it. Scott has done it enough to know.*

the building across the street, which is an old ten-story, partially occupied loft building. They go around to the alley at the rear and climb to the third story using the fire escape. The residents of the building were evacuated previously by the police patrol units and the snipers make their way to the front of the building facing the street where the incident is taking place.

The windows of the building have different heights and they find one that provides them with an unobstructed view of the store front. This particular position allows them to see the entire inside of the office waiting area through the front window of the store. They quickly set up positions to take advantage of the dark interior of the building by moving back slightly from the window. Smith recalls from the briefing that the front window is made of a heavy plate glass and, although not bulletproof, Smith knows the glass is of sufficient thickness that it may deflect a shot. Smith has estimated the range to the target to be two hundred yards and has set his sights accordingly. He also has selected and loaded armor-piercing ammunition, because of the thickness of the window.

From their position, aided by the scope and the rifle optics, they are able to observe the individuals inside the office waiting area. Smith quickly reports that he is in position and is told to identify the suspect targets. He settles into position behind the rifle and sets about identifying the suspects. He picks out the two suspects and continues to observe and report their activities. The situation has been defused temporarily and Smith has been told to stand by. Smith and Jones continue to act as observers and report every movement within the incident area to the SWAT commander. During this waiting period, they will establish a fifteen-minute rotation period on the rifle. They have learned from their training that periods on the rifle longer than fifteen minutes can cause headaches and loss of concentration.

*Right: All suited up and heading down a flight of stairs, Scott is an intimidating sight. His rifle is a specially built Ruger 77 in .308 Winchester. The Harris Bipod is almost universal on SWAT rifles, folding out of the way under the barrel. He's well equipped for most situations.*







*You will have to look closely to see Scott in the prone position. The muzzle of the rifle is almost exactly in the center of this photo. In order to break up his outline and blend with the surroundings he has used a soft poncho covering over his body. The photo was taken in broad daylight on a sunny day.*

Communication has been established with the suspects and negotiations are under way. The sniper team now is acting as the eyes of the incident commander and will continue to report any activity they observe in the incident

area, no matter how insignificant it may seem. Any information, no matter how trivial, could prove valuable to the commander in making a decision on a course of action.

The sniper team has been in position for 3½ hours and

*Below: The left-hand photo shows just about all that the suspect would ever see of Scott's spotter. With the camera up close, the sniper looks like this. We couldn't photograph his skill with the rifle.*





*Above: Scott displaying camouflage skill again. Look at the dead center of the photo. The blackish lump is the sniper using available concealment. There's a bright sun shining almost right overhead. Scott's still hard to see.*

the situation hasn't improved. Suddenly the suspects decide to move their positions to the building next to the check-cashing business. Through negotiators, the incident commander has allowed them to make the move in trade for two of the hostages. This change blocks the view of both sniper teams and prevents a clear field of fire. The incident commander is apprised of this and instructs the SWAT commander to relocate one of his teams prior to the move. The incident commander stalls the move and the SWAT commander determines that Smith and Jones are the closest team to the new location and instructs them to make a shift to cover that location.

Smith and Jones rapidly pack up their equipment and retrace their path to the fire escape. Once there, they traverse to the next section of the building by climbing the ledge to reenter the building through a back window and establish a similar position with a clear field of fire to the new incident location. Once in position, they report that they

are ready and the incident commander allows the suspects to move after they release two hostages.

The situation is unchanged for two more hours as Smith and Jones continue their vigil. As Smith is taking his turn on the rifle, he notices that a female hostage starts to lose control and is screaming hysterically at the suspects. The suspects threatens to kill the hostage and the incident commander gives the okay to the SWAT commander to eliminate the suspects if the threat is attempted. The SWAT commander relays the word to the sniper team and Smith takes the safety off the rifle and aims in on the suspect who has the clearest possible opportunity to harm the hostage, designating him as his first target.

Poised on the rifle, Smith waits and observes. The sights of the rifle put Smith in such position that he can see every move the potential target makes. At this point he is mentally reviewing the obstacles in his way to a clear shot. He wants to be as sure as possible that the one and only shot he will get does the job and that he shoots at just the right time to prevent the suspect from harming the hostage.

*Below: In this photo, the camera moved closer, to within a few feet, and he still can't be seen. Part of the trick is using the shadow created by the strong light and the rest in careful positioning of the poncho over his body.*





While observing, Smith senses that the situation appears to be defusing and the hostage and suspects seem to be back in control. He immediately reports this to the SWAT commander who relays it to the incident commander. Smith is instructed to remain at the ready and continue to observe. Smith puts the safety back on the rifle and continues observing and reporting.

By now, the incident has been on going for seven hours. The suspects are beginning to realize the futility of their position and have indicated they may be willing to surrender.

Through further negotiations, the situation is resolved and the hostages are released without harm. Shortly thereafter the suspects surrender. Smith and Jones remain in position, at the ready, during the arrest. On signal of the

*Fully armed and ready to go, Scott slings his rifle and draws the .45 automatic. Dressed and equipped in this fashion, he is intimidating in his appearance. If that can help resolve the situation, so much the better. But...*



SWAT commander, the two snipers pack up their gear and rejoin the team to be transported back to the station.

Once back at the station, they service and store their weapons and equipment, attend an extensive debriefing and file the necessary reports prior to being released to head back home.

It's 4 a.m. when Smith enters his house, after having been gone for twelve hours. Most of that time had been spent in position behind a rifle sight, with the power of life and death at his trigger finger. The authorization to fire the weapon is not usually decided by the sniper and even after that authorization is given, it still does not require that the sniper fire, if he feels the shot can not be made safely or, if for some other reason, it won't be effective. No one will normally fault a sniper if he decides not to shoot. The decision to shoot is strictly his, once the authority has been given to attempt a shot. Smith has been on the department for six years and is an accomplished marksman, having distinguished himself with the rifle and pistol. Prior to joining the police department he served with the United States Marine Corps as a sniper.

This incident, although not real, illustrated the type of operation in which a police sniper may be involved. Not all situations require the taking of a life, but should the situation require it, Smith, because of his regular and thorough training, was prepared to do so. His past training has given him the confidence and skill needed to take the suspect out with one shot, because he has fired that shot successfully time and time again. Due to the agency's selection and training process, they picked the right man for the job and employed him properly. As you can see from this hypothetical situation, it payed off!

The psychological effect of a sniper was and always will be devastating and disruptive to the enemy in war. It is particularly devastating when used against citizens by the lawless. It's somewhat comforting to know the law enforcement community has the ability to field capable police marksmen to counter this potential and to be just as devastating if the need arises. — Joe Boyd

*...if he's forced to shoot that rifle, he'll do everything possible to make the one shot count. It's the Cold Shot, the first one from a cold barrel. He doesn't get sighters. He may not get a second chance. He may have to lie in position for hours. He faces one hell of a challenge...*





## CHAPTER THIRTEEN.....

# SPECIAL WEAPONS

*Modern Tactics And  
Personnel Employment  
Are Changing For These Highly Trained Groups*



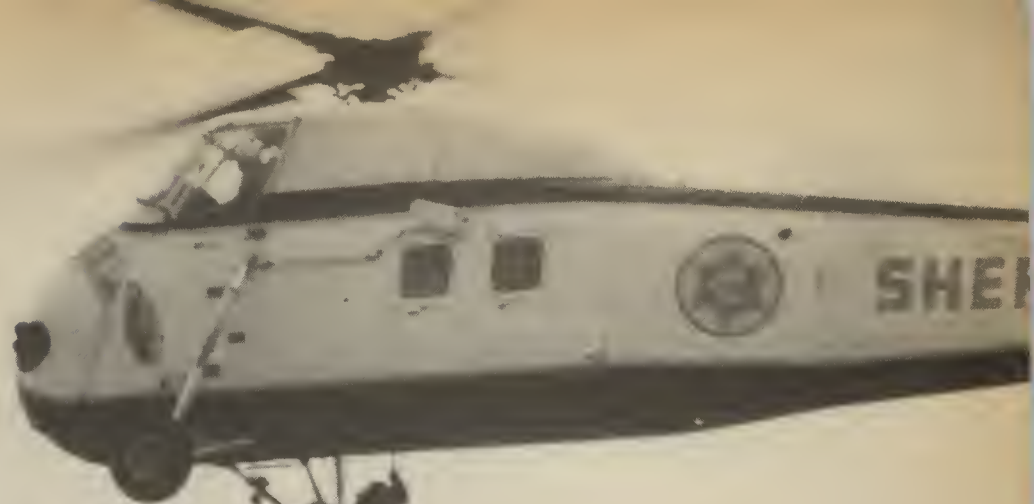
**S**PECIAL WEAPONS AND TACTICS (SWAT) has been the new kid on the block for a couple of decades now. Those police agencies with such units are finding more and more uses for their talents. What began as a voluntary, often part-time, extra-duty assignment has, in some departments, become a career field in itself. The tactics and the training

are changing. New weapons used by SWAT personnel are discussed elsewhere in this book; this chapter will deal primarily with the tactics of SWAT, although it is impossible to totally divorce the two.

In some cases, even the name has changed. The Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, for instance, has changed the name of its unit to Special Weapons Team (SWT),



# AND TACTICS





*An entry team may be as few as two officers. Large departments which have helicopters available to them may utilize them to gain an advantage by approaching a building from the roof, while officers stand on skids.*

which operates as a part of the department's Special Enforcement Bureau (SEB). The missions, and the tactics to accomplish the assigned missions, are evolving as time progresses. Members of the SWT are called upon to carry out more duties than the traditional "subdue the armed hostage-taker" role, which has been the primary mission of most such units in the recent past.

Most of the special units still have a requirement to react to such situations, but they have additional duties, not previously required. Traditionally, the SWAT team was called out to handle a hostage situation or an armed confrontation within a house or apartment. They still are. Los Angeles County deputies may be called in from regular duties or from training at any moment, when needed for a sticky situation. In Los Angeles County, officers assigned are

full-time Special Weapons Team members. They work and stay together in five-man teams, rather than being assigned to scattered, unrelated duties while awaiting a call for deployment.

Assignment to most, if not all, SWAT organizations is highly selective. Most organizations require that the officer has a specific minimum number of years on the force, often five years of superior service. Rookies need not apply. All must pass rigid psychological testing, as well as peer evaluations before appointment to the SWAT training course.

In Los Angeles County, the formal training is forty hours long, which starts with twenty persons in each class. Along the way, some are dropped from the course because of mental, physical or psychological inability to handle the





*The helicopter skids are sometimes used by SWAT team members to hang from. This approach may be used if the chopper cannot put down on the roof of a building. Officers must hang on; they do not use safety belts.*

intense training. Once through the forty-hour formal training course, at least one-quarter of the SWT members' time continues in training of one type or another. Weapons training takes up a portion of the officers' time, along with the study of new tactics and new forms of criminal behavior, plus personal physical fitness. SWAT work is physically demanding and the officer must be able to sustain intense physical effort over a long period of time and still be able to function in his job at high efficiency. Rappelling down a rope hung from a hovering helicopter takes nerves of steel, as well as muscles in the best of condition.

A typical Special Weapons Team is made up of five members, with the possible addition of four others for certain assignments. The Team leader (usually a sergeant or sergeant-selectee), the Scout and Back Up all are armed

with at least Heckler & Koch MP5 machine guns. The other two members, designated as Fourth Man and Fifth Man, carry revolvers, plus any other special weapons, such as shotguns, required at the time. If necessary, the five-man entry team may be augmented by a Gas Man, a Back-up Gas Man (BUG), a Long Rifle (sniper) and his Spotter. This is the way they are trained and the way they are deployed.

Entry into a building with a suspected or known armed suspect may be from ground level, through a door or window or even from the roof when deposited there by a police helicopter.

In a typical situation involving a barricaded and armed suspect, the officers on the scene would contact the Special Enforcement Bureau, which would evaluate the situation



to determine if a Special Weapons Team is required. In Los Angeles County, there are six SWTs on call and, if their assistance is needed, the nearest team would be contacted by radio and dispatched immediately. The officers always have at hand their SWT uniforms and weapons and can reach virtually any location within the huge county in a matter of minutes. Extra weapons, ammunition and equip-

*Fast and maneuverable, the little helicopter may set down on a flat roof and the officers simply step off. Emergency extractions are similar.*

*In training, Los Angeles County Special Weapons Team begins approach to building entrance. Note that one officer scans and covers rear of building.*

ment are loaded in a Special Weapons Team van and it is dispatched to the scene at the same time as the members.

Upon arrival, the officers on the scene normally brief the SWT members on the situation. The SEB also will determine whether a trained negotiator might be needed; someone who might be able to contact and communicate with the suspect. Talk, Special Weapons Team members agree,







*Moving up the steps, first officer is careful to duck under window to avoid being spotted or shot at by suspect inside. Three officers cover him.*

is always preferable to bullets. The team on the scene will busy itself initially with clearing the area of bystanders, determining whether hostages are involved, learning about the floor plan of the building or room where the suspect is located and establishing communications with other units, headquarters and the suspect, if possible.

Friends and relatives of the barricaded suspect will, if

possible, be contacted and questioned to learn as much as possible about him or her. The team leader will try to learn about possible drug involvement by the suspect; combat experience, if any; family life; past history of violence; everything and anything that might aid the team if it has to enter.

If communications can be established with the suspect,

*At this point, two members have reached far side of the door, one covering the near window. Four more cover other windows and approach to door.*





either by telephone or by voice from close by, every attempt will be made to talk him out without injury or harm to anyone. This may take hours, even days, but is the goal of most special teams. There is always the possibility that gunfire, from either side, will strike police or bystanders. As long as the suspect does not open fire and is not harming any third party within reach, talk is the preferred tactic.

*At this point, the entry team is ready to burst through the door, while front windows are still covered. Each member stays below window level.*

Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't.

Each situation is different. The experienced negotiator and SWAT member understands that identical tactics will not work in each situation, but certain basic methods and attempted actions usually are applicable. If communications can be established with the suspect, almost any technique short of shooting is worth trying. In some

*False walls and doorways have been constructed for training purposes, but this is the way an entry team might appear from inside the building.*





*Not every department can afford helicopters and not every situation calls for their use. San Bernardino County, California, SWAT team members practice scaling walls to reach building roof.*



situations, a friend or relative may be brought in to talk with the suspect. Or a clergyman or local government official may be able to satisfy the suspect that his grievance will be considered or solved, if he gives himself up.

There is a limit to how long the talk phase can continue, but most special tactics members realize that, so long as progress seems to be made and no one is being harmed, a

long period of communications is worth the effort. Experienced members, however, usually will recognize when further discussion is fruitless. Either some type of physical action is imminent by the suspect, or it has begun, or experience tells the law enforcement officers that the suspect is simply playing a game and has no intention of giving in.

When the SWAT team recognizes that the time for talk



*Physical conditioning is vital to SWAT team members. They must possess the strength and agility to do such things as walk up walls. In this drill, the man going up the wall is pulled by four others.*

is over, the initial action may be to utilize tear gas, depending upon the situation. If there are hostages, tear gas may not be a viable solution. In any case, special tactics personnel always are equipped with tear gas canisters and gas masks at all times.

If entry is indicated, the team leader must decide how and where it is to be made. Several factors must be considered: If a door or window is the way in, is it already open or broken? Is it to be a front, side or rear opening? Perhaps

an entry from the roof may be the safest and there may be a requirement for a helicopter, if available.

If a helicopter is to be employed, decisions must be made regarding the height of the roof; the slope, if any; existing openings; and the number of personnel likely to be needed on the roof. In some cases, two or more simultaneous entries may be the most likely to succeed.

Not every law enforcement agency has helicopters, but most large urban and suburban departments do. Success-



ful copter operations require a great deal of training, coordination and flawless communications, not to mention highly skilled pilots. Officers may ride in the helicopter, following techniques based on military operations, to jump onto the roof, or they may ride the skids and jump when the chopper is low enough. In some situations, it may be necessary that the officers rappel down the copter as it hovers several feet above the rooftop. These maneuvers require plenty of training and skill to be successful. In operation, the drop from a helicopter takes only a few seconds and the aircraft is away for a second load or for aerial observation.

Often an entry team of two members is all that is required to gain access from the roof of a building. The helicopter approach has two advantages: First, it brings the entry team into an area which might otherwise be inaccessible, if the building stands alone. A single-family house or a downtown apartment building are examples. Secondly, the helicopter is fast and can get the team to the rooftop in a matter of seconds, using the element of surprise. The team members are deposited on the roof often before the barricaded suspect can react. The tactic is designed to save lives.

The team then may enter through a second-story window, rappel off the roof edge to enter through a side window, locate a balcony door or window or simply work their way down to ground level in the rear of the house to enter or observe from an area previously denied them. Again, flawless coordination and communications are required for such tactics.

If a ground-level entry is called for, caution is the rule. In training, each member realizes the need for covering each and every possible danger point. Windows or other openings must be passed under so as not to alert the suspect inside. As the opening is passed, it is kept covered by each SWAT member as he passes. Doors, closed or open, are treated the same way and must be passed in the shortest possible amount of time. Silence also may be necessary, depending upon the situation. Finally, on signal, the entrance is rushed by as many members as possible. The object is to get inside rapidly and spread out inside, not remaining silhouetted by the window or door.

Military tactics usually call for entrance from the upper floors or roof, working downward while clearing each room and hallway as the team works. But in the case of most hostage or barricaded-suspect situations, such tac-

*San Bernardino County SWAT members practice placing first two members on roof by forming human ladder. With at least four on the roof, remaining team will be pulled by hand or by climbing ropes, opposite.*



*The Marine Corps' Camp Pendleton training facilities are utilized by several local SWAT groups. The helicopter tower is used for teaching rappelling techniques by San Diego PD.*

tics might well lead to death or injury of innocent parties.

When most police departments first began employing special weapons and tactics, the units formed sometimes were treated as step-children. While there may have been plenty of excitement and challenge in serving with SWAT, it was a tour of duty that might not enhance a career. There sometimes was resentment by regular duty officers. SWAT was not always respected.

Because of the recent activities of various SWAT organizations, the perception, employment, recruitment and training of these groups has seen a change over the past decade or so. Today, in many larger law enforcement agencies, SWAT duty not only is career-enhancing, but often becomes career-long assignment. Sergeants and lieutenants are picked from within the SWAT ranks and there is room for promotions, while remaining within the organization.

About twenty years ago, most of the SWAT members were military/combat veterans with broad experience with military weapons and tactics. The arms and methods used



by most SWAT units of the time reflected that. Today, the weapons — and the personnel using them — are changing.

The employment of the group has changed somewhat, too. There are still times when the SWAT members are called on to save a hostage, or handle a barricaded suspect situation. Increasingly, the SWATs of Los Angeles County are called upon to provide back-up muscle in a variety of dangerous situations. There are times when a summons or warrant must be served on a drug-related crime suspect. If the investigating officer feels the situation may be dangerous, if the suspect is a known dealer with a history of violence or if the building is thought to be fortified and guarded by armed criminals, the Special Weapons Team will be on hand. If the team is not needed, so much the better, but if trouble breaks out, the investigating officers will appreciate the help. Often, the presence of the SWAT people is enough to avert further resistance.

Most members of the present-day Special Weapons Team of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department are

*Marine Chief Warrant Officer James Tadlock is an explosives demolitions expert who is able to share his military training while attending San Diego Police Department's SWAT academy.*





not military veterans. They have come from within the ranks of the deputies with five or more years of experience and a strong desire for SWT duty. Most have waited long periods after acceptance for an opening in the organization. All have gone through additional training and psychological screening. Each maintains his skill levels through constant training.

It used to be that many departments relied on nearby military units to help train the law enforcement personnel in the use and operation of the weapons which then were

unfamiliar to most police officers. Use of equipment such as long-range sniper rifles, machine guns, gas grenades, gas masks and the like needed to be learned and the military already had the training. Most military units passed on their expertise freely to enforcement agencies that requested it. Those police departments which were close to large Army or Marine Corps bases had an added advantage of utilizing the extensive training areas and ranges.

Roles have been reversed in recent years, however, and now it is the police agencies doing the training. They have

*Gunner Tadlock practices the Australian rappel down a steep slope at Camp Pendleton.  
(Official U.S. Marine Corps photographs.)*





*The typical Los Angeles County SWT team is lead by an experienced sergeant. The department offers career promotions for officers who wish to remain within the unit.*

experience in dealing with barricaded suspects and hostage-holders. They are the ones armed with the newest, most sophisticated firearms. The knowledge is frequently freely shared by several agencies. The training has reciprocal results.

Recently, as part of training of the Special Weapons and Tactics Academy of the San Diego Police Department, twenty-four trainees spent two weeks at the huge Marine base in Southern California. One of the trainees was a Marine Corps warrant officer of the explosive ordnance disposal unit with Marine Aircraft Group 39 at the base.

"It's a tough school," Chief Warrant Officer James F. Tadlock admitted. "Our first day, we went on a seven-mile run and we've been running ever since. On the fifth day, we ran up Little Egypt, one of the steeper hills they have out here. Yesterday, we must have done more than three hundred push-ups with all our gear on. It's like recruit training, but the instructors get down and do the push-ups, too. You have to be aggressive and be willing to put up with the pain."

The Academy made a special spot available for Tadlock as part of their ongoing reciprocal relationship. In return, the Marines who go through the civilian training provide instruction to civilian trainees in their own specialty.

"I provided a demolitions demonstration, teaching the trainees about explosives and how to recognize and iden-

tify certain explosives, including improvised explosive devices," Tadlock said.

"We also had a weapons familiarization and identification session. All in all, the training is a good test to see if each trainee has what it takes."

Along with the Special Response Team which is geared for such problems as hostage rescue, the San Diego SWAT has a Primary Response Team which is on call twenty-four hours a day. Within twenty minutes, team members can arrive almost anywhere in San Diego for assigned missions or to isolate and contain a scene.

SWAT trainees are officers of the San Diego department with a minimum of three years service. Usually, there is only one SWAT Academy conducted each year and the potential trainees not chosen for a specific year have to wait until the next year.

Before being assigned for training, candidates must face a screening board and pass the required physical testing to make sure they will be able to gain the most from the intensive training.

Reciprocal and mutual training goes on all over the country, wherever a SWAT department and a military base can get together. Each has something to teach the other, providing benefits to both, as well as to the tax-paying public which they are sworn to serve and protect. — *Roger Combs.*



*SWAT helicopter operations require a great deal of close attention and communications training for success.*

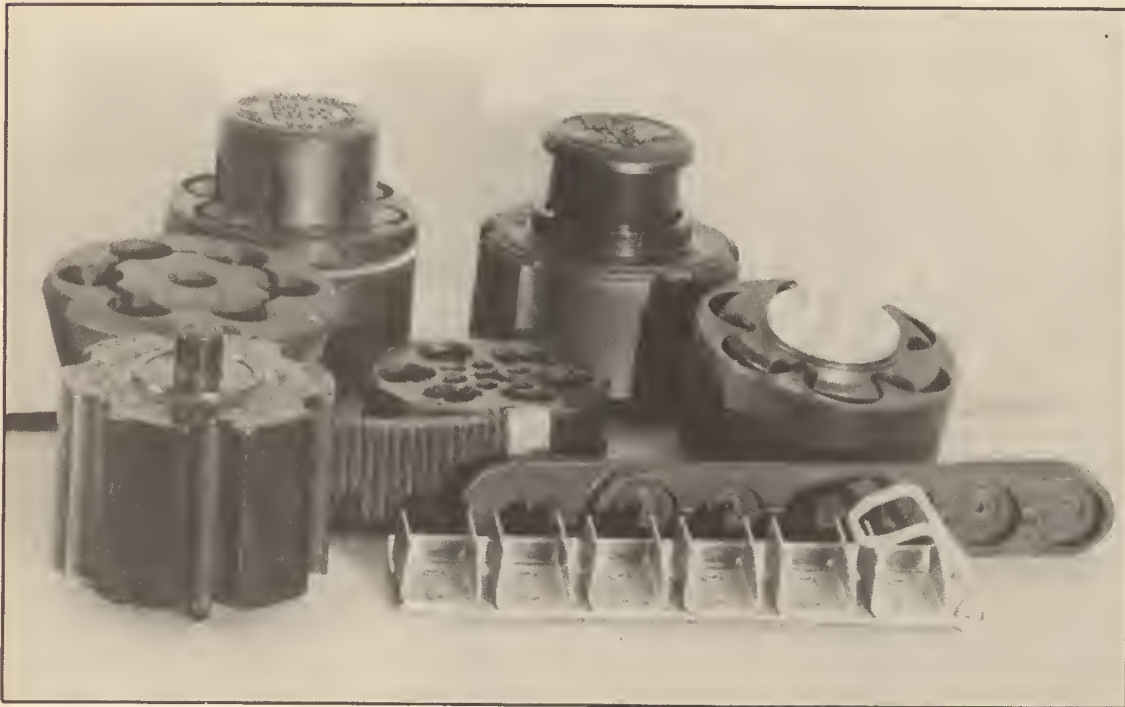




## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

# GRIPS, GADGETS AND GEAR

*An Unguided Tour Through The World  
Of Miscellaneous Police Equipment.*



*Speedloaders were once considered a gadget, but now they are a matter of necessity. These are some of the early ones contrasted with the best of the current crop; all allow rapid reloading.*

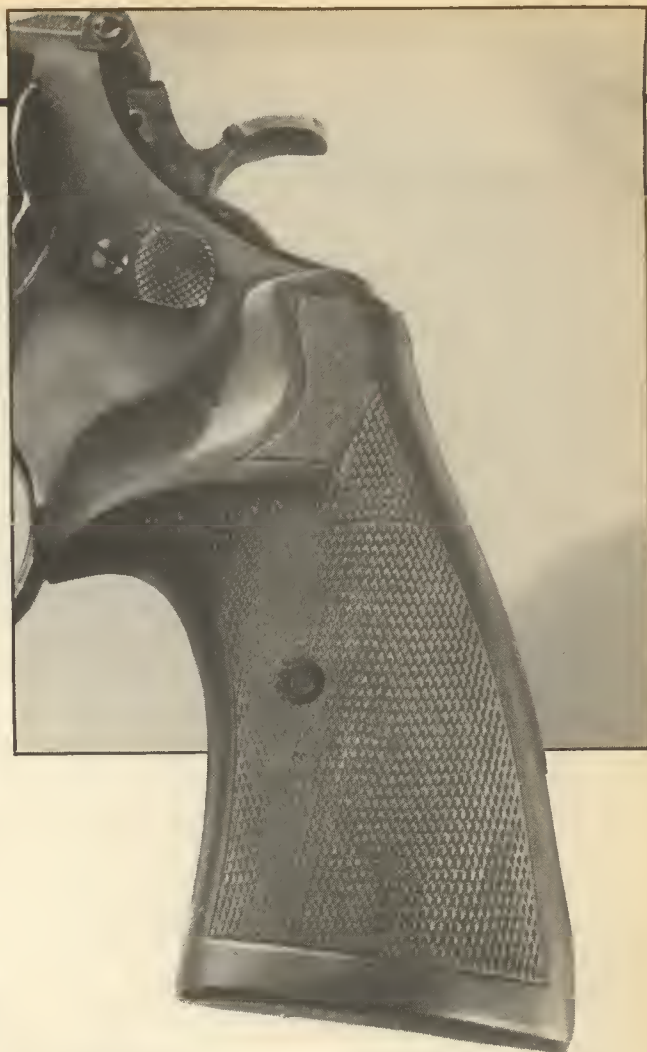
**I**NDUSTRIOUS POLICEMEN are inveterate gadget-lovers. They just can't resist fooling with one more little whoozis or whatever that might make the job a little easier or safer. People who make whoozies and whatever are fully aware of this and constantly update their products, since cops are willing to spend some serious bucks on gear.

### GRIPS

If you put aftermarket grips on your automatic pistol,

you are probably doing it because you like the look of the different material from which the new grips are made. Fancy walnut or other woods, horn, stag and even ivory or pearl sometimes are found on the police automatic pistol. Most automatics are shaped so that they're flat and there's not much you can do to improve the shootability of the gun with grips. Elaborate thumbrests and finger grooves don't belong on a combat gun of any kind, so why not just stick with the plastic or wood panels the maker provides? There is one small exception to this idea. Many shooters become





*Aftermarket grips help almost any revolver. Above left: Herrett's superb Jordan Trooper stocks on S&W 581 are one of the best investments a police officer can make. Left: Dave Wayland makes these grips for all popular revolvers. They're easy to shoot with. Above: Rubber is the material used in the Pachmayr line and that means that thicknesses can be reduced. Lots of cops use them.*



comfortable in handling the automatic pistol only after Pachmayrs are installed. That slightly tacky feel allows them to hang on as never before.

Revolvers are a completely different story. Somewhere in my files, I have a little booklet published by Smith & Wesson in the 1930s. Written by Colonel Doug Wesson, it's a handgun digest of sorts and contains a brief mention of the reason why the butts of the company's gun are shaped the way they are. *The familiar S&W grip shape was originally intended to keep the gun from being twisted out of your hand in a fight!*

In other words, shooting the gun with speed and accuracy is not a factor in how it was shaped. The contour of the grip frame has not changed materially on either Colt or S&W revolvers since the turn of the century — and that's why custom grips are such a best-selling product.

Herrett's, of Twin Falls, Idaho, is the leading maker of both custom and production units for all popular revolvers. Herrett's prefers to term their products "stocks" and I see

*HKS loader for the S&W L frame series. It uses a twist knob to release the cartridges into the cylinder. It is a durable unit.*



no reason to not accede to their designation. If you send them a tracing of your hand, they'll make you a set of Jordan Troopers, the most popular combat stocks ever put on a handgun. The company also sells a line of non-custom stocks such as the Shooting Star, Shooting Ace and Shooting Masters models. Any of them will improve the handling of the gun, but the Jordans are considered the best.

Dave Wayland of Mill Valley, California, is a smaller maker who turns out original designs that are quite popular. He calls his leading line of police grips the "Classic Plus" models. Wayland is an avid student of the topic and has secured large quantities of the more exotic hardwoods.

*This is one of the first speedloaders of modern times. It is a single piece of moulded rubber. In use, device was positioned on the cylinder with rounds in place, then twisted away. It didn't work as well as current models.*



*Above: Safariland's current speedloader has an internal button that contacts the center pin in the revolver's cylinder. When pushed down hard, the button releases the six rounds to drop into the revolver's six chambers.*

His grips, for either auto or revolver, will help the shooting and appearance of anyone's gun.

Pachmayr remains the dominant company in the grip business. Their grips are all made from moulded neoprene rubber with a steel insert inside. Since rubber is a homogenous material with no grain to adversely affect its tensile strength, this simply means that the material can be reduced in thickness and not lose durability. Some need a small modification of the basic revolver butt shape. Often, the



Pachmayr grip design is the only way that this can be achieved for use by a person with small hands.

Despite the criticism often leveled at Pachmayrs that the grip is too tacky in feel, the fact remains that thousands of sets are in use. The current Pachmayr catalog lists over eighty different sizes and shapes; many are for police automatic pistols and revolvers.

## SPEEDLOADERS

Many automatic pistols won't even fire without a magazine and all autos need them to be something other than a single-shot. The sheet metal box magazine is a necessity for automatic users. Nearly everyone prefers to use the magazines made by the original manufacturer of the gun. They are indispensable items; everyone needs several spares.

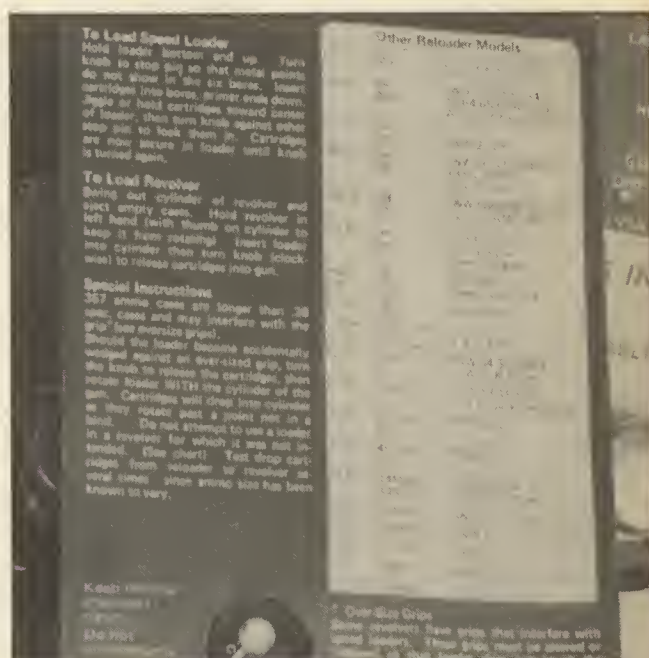
In this day and age, equally indispensable are the cylindrical devices called speedloaders — made to rapidly reload the revolver. As best as I can recall, the old moulded rubber models made by Hunt Engineering were the first speedloaders of modern times. It isn't a new idea, by the way, in that turn-of-the-century Colt catalogs showed drawings of a wooden rapid-loading device.

Nearly all speedloaders have a basic concept in common. They hold six rounds of ammunition in a rigid position, spaced so that they will match the spacing of the individual chambers of a particular model of revolver. Six rounds are brought into register with the chambers of the

gun and a release mechanism is activated which lets the cartridges drop into place.

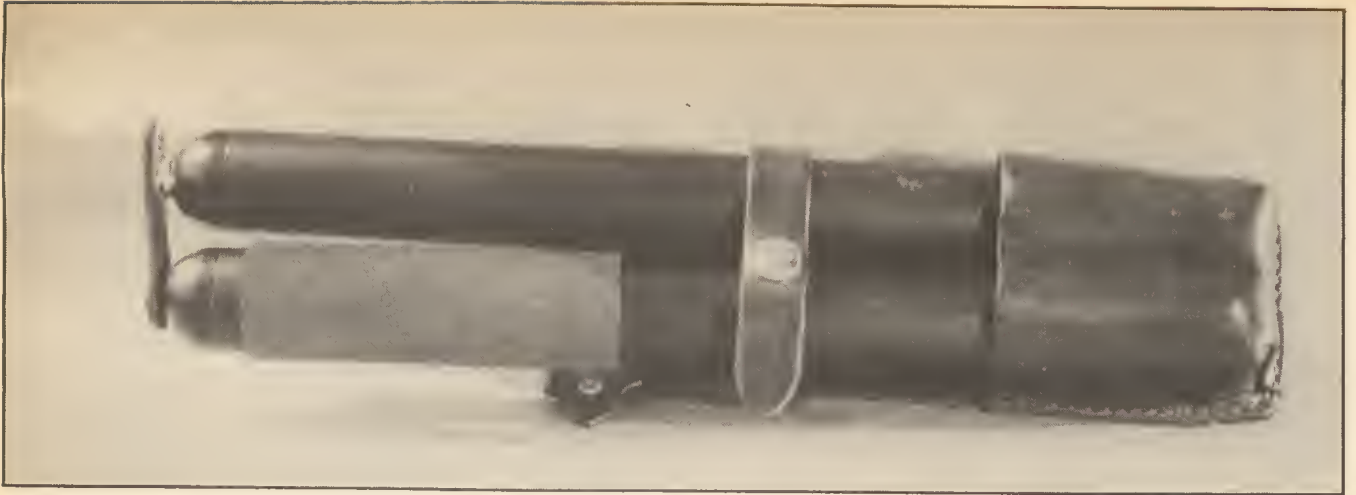
I suppose that there are still a few people using the old-style dump boxes or even the cowboy loops to hold their spare ammunition. But the overwhelming majority of revolver-carrying policemen use one form or another of speedloader.

Probably the most widespread and durable of the contemporary speedloading devices is the HKS. This is an aluminum and hard plastic device made for almost anything in the way of revolvers. The individual rounds are

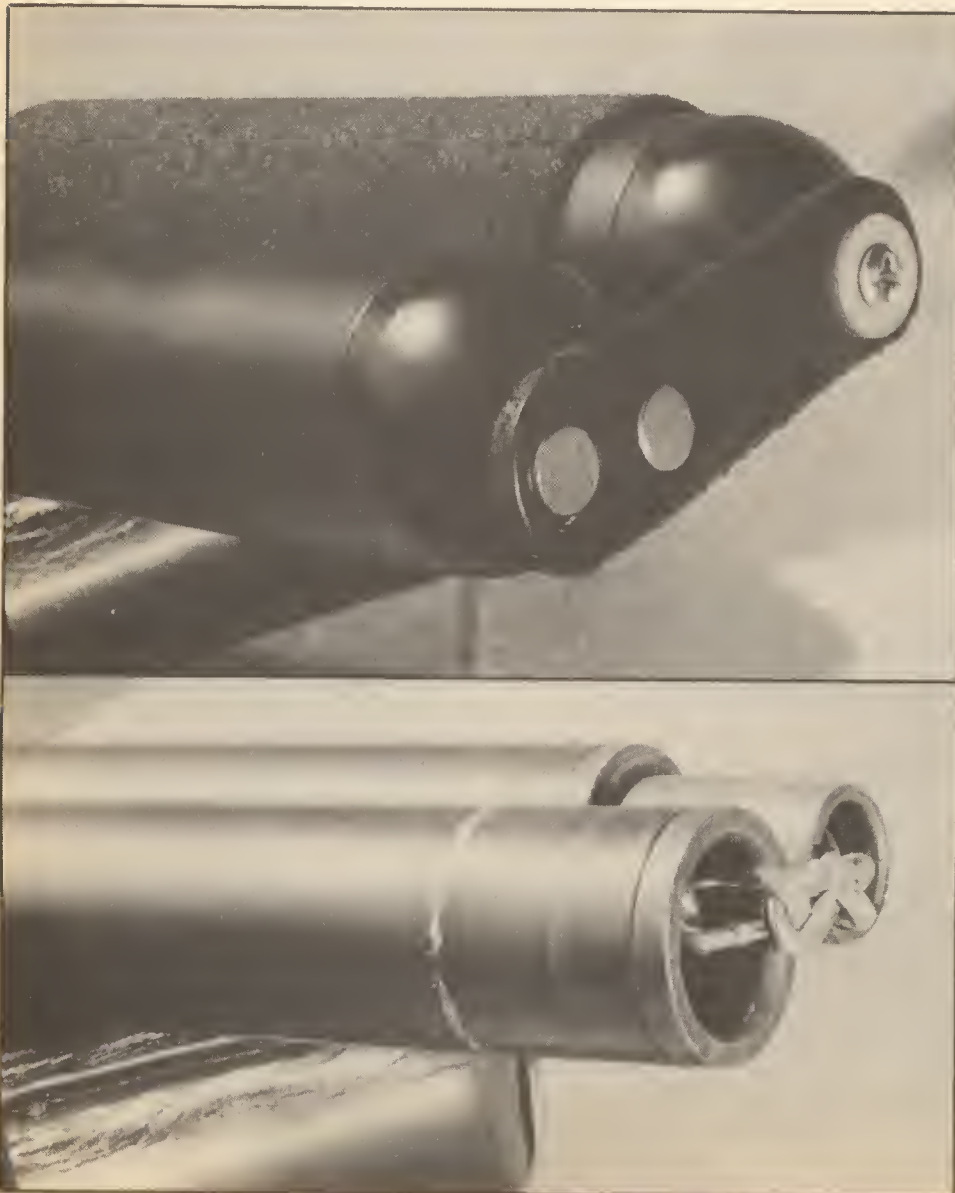


Right: Back of the HKS blister pack details the variety of units the company makes. They can handle nearly any police revolver. Below: HKS, Safariland make loaders for .45 Colt revolver; wadcutters handload weighs 272 grains.



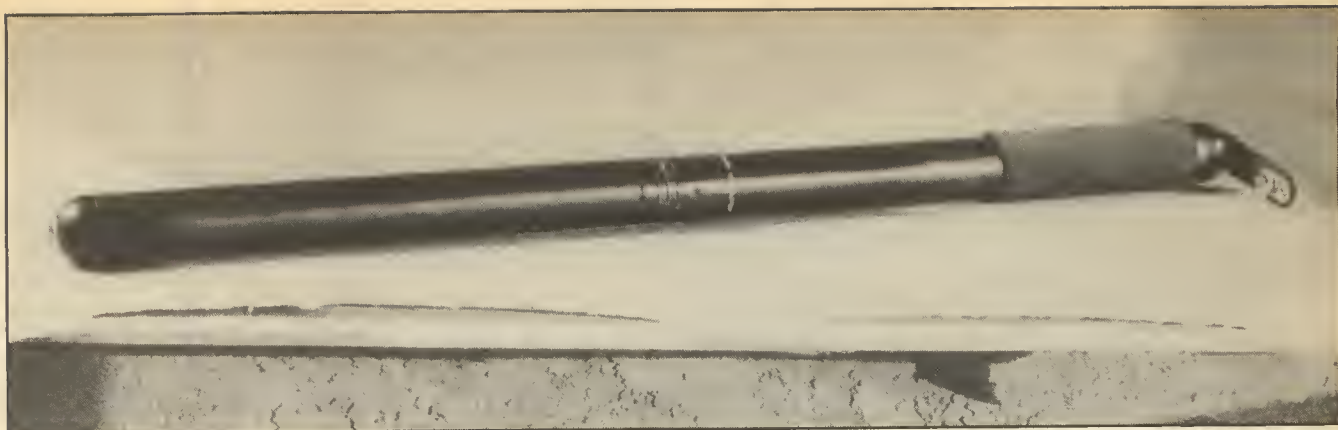


*The Lawrence Leather Co. of Portland, Oregon, is now selling this handy little contraption — a folding baton which worked quite well in our testing. The baton is carried in the pivoting holster with quick release strap.*



*Above left: The ends of the baton are held together as shown. Lower photo displays the joint. There's a hefty spring at each end of that section of chain. When the retaining strap is released, the chain pulls the two parts of the baton together with a businesslike clang sound.*





*The Lawrence baton unfolded and ready for use. With the exception of the fasteners on the ends of the baton, it is exactly the same as any of several different metal batons that have been marketed recently.*

held in place by sturdy little aluminum fingers that catch under each of the rims. There's a positive, audible click stop for the central shaft of the loader. In use, the loader is fitted up to the cylinder of the revolver with the six rounds inserted into the six chambers. When the loader is seated fully against the back of the cylinder, the shooter gives the knob sticking out of the loader a quick turn. This clears the tiny fingers from the rims of the cartridges and allows them to drop into the chambers. It works quite well and it is exceptionally durable.

The Safariland loader looks somewhat the same, but works on a different principle. This one holds the rounds in place in typical fashion, but the release is different. It does not need the extra hand movement of the HKS twist. Instead, the Safariland unit uses a button on the downward side of the loader, in a central position among the cartridges. When the loader is mated to the cylinder, the button comes in contact with the rounded tip of the extractor

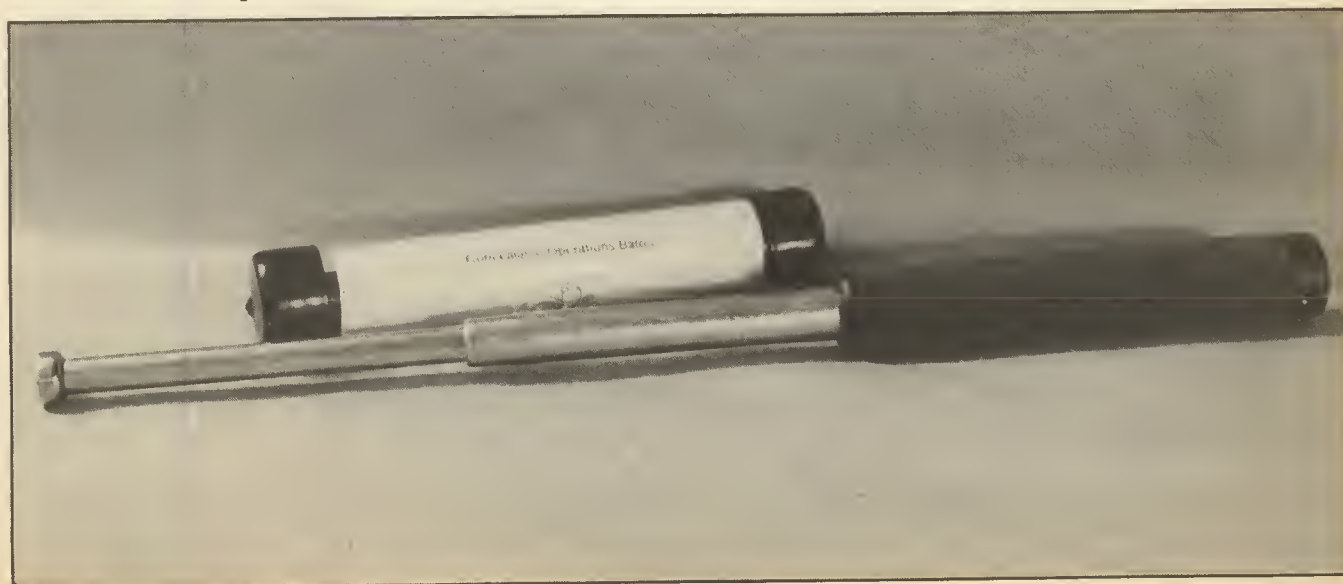
rod. As the loader is firmly pushed against the rear of the cylinder, the button catch is depressed and the six rounds are released to fall into the chambers. With minimal practice, the unit is super-fast to use.

There are other speedloaders on the market and even more that have faded from the scene. Another currently used model which sells well is the Dade. One of the best ever made was the Second-Six. Apparently, that unit isn't currently in production and that's a shame. People who used them quickly fell in love with the speed by which they work.

## IMPACT WEAPONS

Lordy, what a neat term! Impact weapons, batons and even Bianchi's famous "Magic Wand" are, in truth, clubs. They are made to hit people with in order to overcome their unarmed resistance to arrest. This sort of situation happens more commonly than the all-out shooting and a police-

*Another compact impact weapon is the Concealable Operations Baton. This one telescopes several sections of steel into a full length baton. They're held in place by the tight tapering fit of one section into another.*





*Holsters for the ASP batons as used by several federal agencies. They allow the unit to be carried completely out of sight under a business suit.*

*Below: These are often handy things to have in patrol work and you can probably get by with something less than the superb Zeiss compact glass. Still, why not the best?*

man needs a weapon that stuns and hurts a person long enough for him to get the cuffs on. Saps and blackjacks of various sorts have been used for lots of years, but seem to be falling from use.

Batons, two-foot sections of hard plastic or hickory, are useful and the best of them seems to be the PR-24 type with the side-handle feature. While the PR-24s require a good bit more training, their versatility far outweighs the expense involved. One of the main reasons is that they are readily usable as jabbing weapons.

Other than his squeaky leather, nothing so marks a rookie cop as his inability to go smoothly about his business with a baton in the ring on one side of his gunbelt. The things is constantly falling out, getting tangled up with seat belts or otherwise getting in the way. In time, you learn how to manage it, but it takes a little experience. The famous Lawrence leather goods company of Portland, Oregon, recently announced a possible solution to this dilemma.

It's a baton that folds in the middle. Made of two sections of heavy aluminum tubing with rounded ends, the baton is joined in the middle by a short section of heavy chain. In each half, the chain has a whopper of a spring exerting a hefty pull on the chain. This pull has the effect of straightening the two halves until they mate with each other and form a full-length baton. When folded, the baton has a leather tab and fastener on each section which hold it in the folded mode. All that's required to ready it for use is brushing the lift-the-dot fastener against the trouser leg. The spring will pull the two halves into battery with a frightening metallic clank. Stowed in its pivoting leather carrier, the Lawrence folding baton is a compact unit.







*Above: A good gadget for any cop is one of the several miniaturized tape recorders currently on the market. Sometimes, you need to make a record fast and paper and pen just won't do. You can also wire the back seat, thus allowing crime partners to discuss their arrest and where they stashed the loot. It's all admissable.*

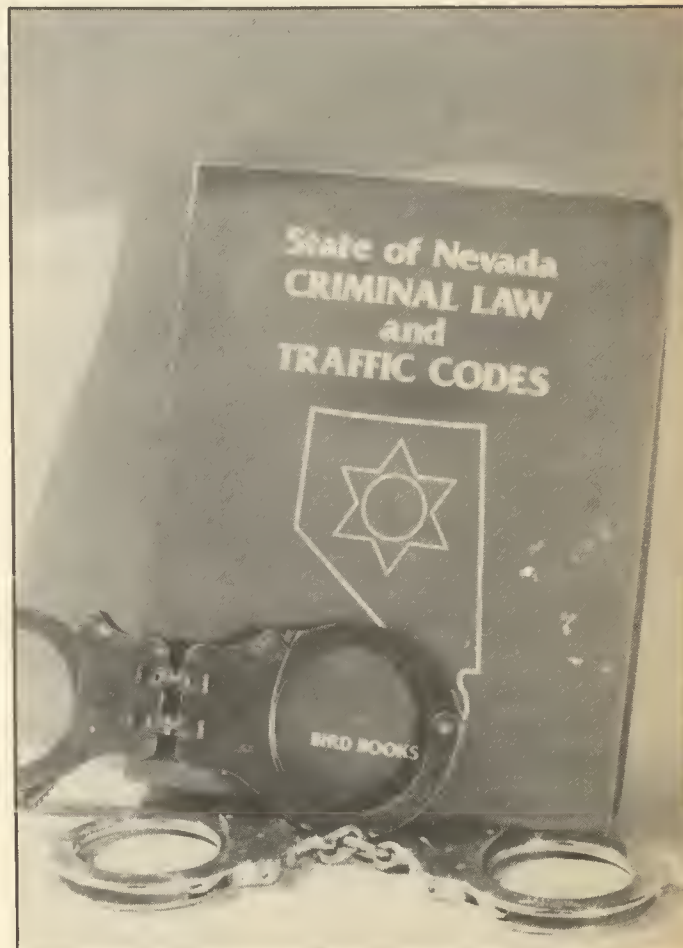
Another approach to the same problem is made by Armament Systems and Procedures. This is a telescoping baton that extends in three sections to a considerably greater length. The major advantage of this item is that it is light and portable, therefore easy for a plainclothes officer to hide. ASP makes a number of different lengths and sizes of these batons. All work on the basis of inertia to extend them.

The officer just snaps them out with a downward flick of the wrist. The heavy sections slide out and lock in the extended position. They stay locked out because of what ASP calls a "dead-lock" taper to the way that they fit together. In use as a jabbing or striking instrument, the baton won't collapse. To put it away, the officer must pound the sections out of their tight friction engagement with each other. Striking the tip against a hard surface will get it down. Several federal agencies are currently using the device.

## OTHER STUFF

There's lots of good sense to carrying a tape recorder in the brief case. Sometimes information that needs recording comes so thick and fast that it defies the ability of anyone to take notes. In the case of things such as natural disasters and major accidents, a calm officer at the scene can make a pretty decent record with a quality recorder. The stores are full of such stuff and you can take your choice.

The market is also full of binoculars and other optics. There are plenty of times that a good pair of field glasses are worth a lot. Even in urban settings where distances are not particularly great, glasses are an aid to surveillance operations.



*You can't use the cuffs without a reason and the book is full of 'em. From Bird Books, the most often used sections of the Nevada statutes are compiled, condensed presented in loose-leaf format. Similar books are in the mill for California and Arizona; there's nothing handier.*

## **CHAPTER FIFTEEN**



# **BOWSER WEARS A BADGE**

*The Police Dog Does Far More Than Intimidate —  
His Sensitive Nose Can't Be Matched  
By The Technology Of The Space Age*

**D**OWN THROUGH the years, the dog has been called man's best friend. He has served as his eyes, ears and companion. He's helped on the ranch, on the hunt and guarded the family home. But one of the most controversial uses of man's best friend has to be in the area of law enforcement and security work.

During World War I, auxiliary police in the city of London were allowed to make their rounds accompanied by their own pet dogs. Across the Atlantic, in 1915, the city of Baltimore instituted the first dog patrol. The dogs used were Airedales that had been purchased in England. The dogs had not been given any formal training for police work and the program was abandoned after a year. Although there was not one reported arrest in conjunction with the

dog programs, there were no reported robberies in the areas where the dogs patrolled.

Not until 1948, when crime was getting out of hand in London, did the modern police dog find its beginning. This time, six Labradors were used as the nucleus of the program and they had as thorough a training program as was available at the time. By 1950, Scotland Yard had incorporated the canine program into its overall program, making it a permanent section of Scotland Yard.

Seven years later, once more the city of Baltimore became the first city in the United States to establish a formal canine program. It went into service in March 1957. At that time, the dogs were used only on Friday and Saturday nights to patrol the hot spots. Today, Baltimore has one of the finest canine units in the United States, employ-



ing not only patrol dogs, but special purpose dogs as well.

During World War II, dogs played an important part on both sides of the lines. The Allied forces used dogs as scouts, patrol and guard duty. This led to the military term that is still used to designate a dog team: K9.

There have been numerous Hollywood moves depicting the misuse of dogs by the Germans, both as guard dogs and scout/tracker dogs, during World War II. Everyone has seen the scene where helpless prisoners are menaced by the vicious, slaving, snarling dog. This type of over-dramatization has led to the vilification of patrol dogs in general and the German shepherd in particular.

Later, during the civil rights movement in the South, the patrol dog again was the subject of numerous civil rights groups' assaults on Southern police departments. The news media photographed the patrol dog in the fore of riot

police formations, ready to bite anyone who came near. Well, let's put some of the blame where it really belongs — the human on the other end of the leash and his supervisor.

Dogs do not form opinions without help from their handler. A well trained dog can represent a viable space on the chain of escalating force that starts with a verbal command and ends with a bullet in flight. The dog — unlike the bullet — can be called back if need be and is not as fatal. Sure, dogs are protective of their handlers, but no more so than the family dog that protects its master or mistress from a burglar, without any training. There has to be a certain amount of control on the handler's part or the system won't work. But, in general, dogs have a tendency to take on the personality of the handler.

Everyone has their own opinion of what makes a good patrol dog. The supervisors want a dog that can almost



*This is getting to be an increasingly common sight in a lot of American cities. The police patrol car, but one that's specially rigged to handle a dog. Usually, that means removal of the rear seat and replacement with a flat decking which is more comfortable for the dog. It is also procedural to have lots of dog identification on the car. Part of the reason for that is liability. Dogs can be a valuable patrol tool when properly utilized.*



*There's a certain affectionate bond that forms between the dog and the handler. This dog is a Marine, one of five currently used by the Military Police Dog section at the Air Station at El Toro. When the picture was taken, the dog was clowning around with his handler.*



*Civilian or military, there's something in the level gaze of a big dog that commands respect. This dog is a well-trained animal and wouldn't harm anyone. But don't lay a violent hand on his shoulder or the dog will go to work.*

read and write and knows such terms as "escalating force" and "public relations." In real terms, this means a dog you can call off a bite and won't take a dump in the middle of a store when he can't find the burglar. The line troops, however, have a different set of criteria when it comes to a patrol dog. They want a dog that can hold off a band of crooks or cover their backs in a dark alley.

Somewhere between the two lies the perfect patrol dog. Administrators have found that one of the best ways to get a good dog is to have an independent evaluator assist with the choice of dogs. In Southern California, several large dog breeders are more than willing to help with the selection of a good patrol dog. Most reputable breeders will sell a dog conditionally and, if possible, a dog should be pur-

chased on the condition that, should it not perform as guaranteed, it can be returned or replaced with another dog.

The military is still the largest user of dogs for both patrol and special purpose. Military dog training is conducted by the United States Air Force for all services at Lackland Air Force Base outside San Antonio, Texas. Here, the dogs are taken through all phases of training from obedience to patrol, tracking and special purpose. This can give the military dog handler an edge over his civilian counterpart. He receives more instruction on the physiology and health care of his dog. On the other hand, military dog handlers in most cases do not take their dogs with them when they change duty stations. Most dogs are permanently stationed on their bases, although certain special pur-





*There are millions of dollars worth of jet aircraft on the flight line at El Toro. The base MPs are charged with the responsibility of security for them. Patrol dogs, such as this handsome shepherd are a big help in getting the job done. The dog and the handler work together — a team.*

pose dogs do travel with their original handler.

The acquisition system now becoming more prevalent is to buy the patrol dog pretrained, then train its handler. Sort of an ersatz means of forming a canine unit. This can eliminate many weeks of training and allows the department that cannot budget for a dog due to the long period of training a viable alternative. Normally, the kennel that pro-

vides this type of service also provides a certificate of performance. These dogs, for the most part, are trained in Germany under strict, controlled conditions.

The selection of handlers is equally as important as the selection of good dogs. A handler should, first of all, be an above average "patrol person."

There are women dog handlers who do their job as well



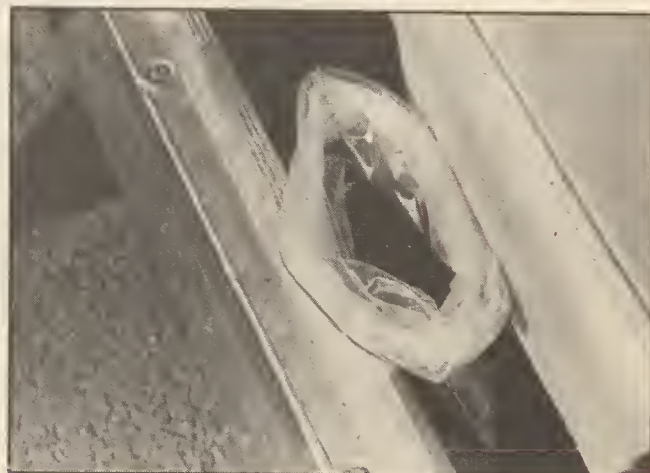
*There's a certain degree of aggressiveness in the dog's nature. He must be trained to use his size, strength and bite only when the handler orders it. It's as important to have the dog stop as it is to have him attack. This attack ended with a curt word from the handler.*

as their male counterparts. That is why the handler must be a good cop — sure of himself or herself before even being considered as a handler. Some folks may argue that a dog can make up for minor deficiencies, such as a lack of aggression. The more familiar argument is that a small patrolman or patrolwoman is a good candidate for a handler, because the dog will offset small stature. Personally, I can't buy that. If you need a dog to give you the command presence to perform the job, you don't belong in law enforcement.

Some of the the traits that a dog handler should possess are a stable personality and home life. Ideally, the handler should be married, have young children and possess infinite patience; he obviously should like and enjoy dogs. There are those out there in the ranks who would take a dog for the perks — usually a take-home car, special uniform and assignments on the busiest shift. This type of dog handler usually is weeded out during the selection process. But all this aside, the dog handler must be even-tempered, able to make sound decisions under stress and realize that he has control of a loyal one-hundred-pound bundle of fur and teeth ready to do his bidding.

Now that we have selected our handlers, there is still the rest of the family that has to agree to Dad or Mom bringing home a new dog. A handler whose family is afraid of or who doesn't like his new dog is in for a rough road — provided the department doesn't pick up on it first.

The training usually will consist of theoretic instruction, history of the K9 program and the basics of canine behavior.



*A quantity of gunpowder used to simulate a bomb. Since the dog's sensitive nose has been attuned to the smell of nitrates, he'll alert if he finds the baggie of powder inside a closed automobile. The powder is adjacent to the driver's seat on the left side of the patrol car.*

Then there will be classes in the use of dog equipment, health care and feeding.

Once these basics are out of the way, the real dog work begins, with obedience and apprehension exercises. This is followed by tracking and evidence-search exercises. This is by no means the complete training schedule, but merely a sample of some of the classes in a three- to four-week course.





*"Where is it, boy, where it it?" The handler encourages the dog to find the contraband explosive. He must be careful to avoid any tone of...*

*...voice or manner which suggests that he KNOWS that there's a bomb to find. The same manner has to be used in all cases, training or not.*



*The dog has smelled the explosive and behaves excitedly for an instant. Seconds later, he had sat down and was waiting for his reward. That is nothing more than a rubber ball. A playful dog with a good nose and careful training is tops.*





*All dogs need a certain amount of obedience training. This animal is going through the obstacle course at the El Toro facility. Since some of the Marine dogs are dual-purpose animals, they need to be in peak condition for the rigors of patrol work. Good condition extends their work day and their working life.*

Keeping in mind that the dog is used to German commands, the first thing the handler has to do is learn some simple German commands. This can prove real exciting the first time the handler can't remember a German command and the dog is about to eat some off-duty cop who thought he'd come out and volunteer to "catch" the dogs during apprehension training.

One way to work your way onto a canine unit is to volunteer to be the bad guy during training exercises. By the end of one session, you know whether you really want to be a handler. The other side of the coin applies to the handler who should be well experienced at "catching" a dog.

Enough has been said about specific training in other articles and this is not meant to be a training manual; more of an overview of working police dogs. The well trained patrol dog and handler can be expected to carry out normal patrol functions as well as searches for suspects in buildings and open areas. Some may also be trained as trackers and some may be trained as special purpose dogs. A well trained handler and dog are a great asset to a department and can put a dent in the local crime scene when used correctly.

Special purpose dogs should be, whenever possible, just that. The more a dog is called upon to do in the way of special tasks or patrol tasks, the more his ability is diluted.

Many dog breeders agree with this premise and try to dissuade, whenever possible, the use of a multi-trained dog. This frees the department from having to employ the stereotype patrol dog and allows the use of other breeds. The most common special purpose dogs are of the hunting dog class. This makes sense, since it's the nose we're interested in, not the ability to bite or menace. This also offers a side effect of good public relations for the department.

My dog is an explosive-detecting canine; a bomb dog. He happens to be a German shorthaired pointer. When you walk into a hotel lobby in civilian clothes with a good-looking hunting dog on leash, people smile and say, "What a nice dog." Try the same move with a full-size German shepherd and watch people move. I can guarantee it won't be toward your dog.

Let's look at the special purpose dogs that are presently in use. There are really only two major types of special purpose dogs: drugs and explosives. Search and rescue is another special type of dog which I'll discuss later.

Of course, there are bound to be dogs out there somewhere trained to do special tasks that are not common. One that comes to mind is a beagle that works for the Food and Drug Administration, looking for illegal food products. If memory serves me right, his name is Bucky. I have a second dog that could perform that task well and I'm sure





*Narcotics-sniffing dogs are widely used in the military. Here, a large baggie of marijuana has been concealed behind the bumper of an auto.*

his productivity would go up, if he were allowed to eat all that he found.

Not long ago, I attended a Department of Defense seminar. One of the subjects involved the detection of nitrates in closed containers using biosensors. I must admit I was intrigued with the title, but it took me a few minutes to figure out they were talking about bomb dogs.

No matter what the subject, you always can find someone who knows more about your job; at least, they think they do. This is especially true in the area of special purpose dogs. One of the most successful K9 search team projects has come about through the cooperative effort of the FAA and the training and evaluative capabilities of the United States Air Force. The goal of this program is to have search teams strategically located throughout the nation so that no threatened aircraft flying over the United States will be more than thirty minutes flying time from this emergency explosive detection team. Many airlines have aided this project by allowing the local bomb squads with detector dogs to use out-of-service planes for training. This allows the dogs to train in the aircraft they will search.

It is important to dispel some myths right off. You do not train a bomb dog by feeding him explosives and making him an addict. Explosive products for the most part are toxic and you would kill a dog before you ever got him hooked on explosives. Secondly, we don't send the dog in on his own to search for explosives. Once in a while, I see a Hollywood production where the dog is sent in to perform a search and everyone waits outside. It's never clear as to what the dog is supposed to do if he finds the explosives. It would be interesting to see the dog come out with a neatly drawn sketch of the device, but where would he put his pencil?

Actually, the handler is on the other end of the leash during a search. A bomb dog works what we call a directed



*The narcotics dog found the dope, even though it was securely wrapped inside several layers of plastic and taped shut. There's no substitute for that keen nose. In civilian law enforcement agencies, narcotics dogs are equally valuable. They are often used at air terminals.*



*The subject being mauled by the dog is safe because the dog is muzzled. He's anything but small, but the...*



search. That is, he follows the handler's direction. The reason for this type of search is the lack of time in a bomb threat that would allow for a random search. The dog gets used to searching similar structures and vehicles in the same manner every time and eventually the dog will conduct the search with a minimum of direction from the handler.

Knowing the dog is working well, the handler can put more attention into the search and make sure no area is overlooked by the dog. Of course, all of this is a game to the dog, but he doesn't do this for fun — unless he's in the British Army, where they don't reward their dogs with anything but praise. He does it for either food or a rubber ball reward. During the training of the dog, rewards or punishment serve to change the behavior of the animal. Punishment is effective in altering a dog's behavior only when administered following a behavior you do not want to occur, for example, if the dog bites someone.

You must first establish a good bond between the handler and the dog before you can use punishment effectively. It will not work on a shy dog. One of the first things you learn when training a dog is to reward the dog for doing

what you want it to do, but never punish it for not doing what you want. If you do, the dog will develop a fear for the punisher as well as the place in which it is punished. This fear may disrupt the behavior you are trying to develop. Verbal commands such as "good dog" and "no" have no meaning to the dog, except in relation to the consequences or reward that follow each word. One of the accepted means of correction is the choke collar along with a sharply spoken "No!" This is usually sufficient to correct any unwanted behavior.

My dog works for a rubber ball reward, as do most of the military dogs. The theory behind this type of reward is the dog wants to play with the ball so badly he'll do anything to get it. To train the dog to this response, the most essential element is to first find a dog that likes to play ball. Then, using a rubber ball and a simple explosive such as smokeless powder, the dog learns to associate the smell of the explosive with the ball. Eventually other explosives are substituted into the equation and the dog builds up his catalog of smells. How the scent mechanism actually works in the presence of a particular odor has never been determined positively. There is, however, no shortage of theories



*...dog is turning him over like a big rubber ball. This sort of training is necessary to keep the dog in shape.*



(at least thirty), but two are somewhat noteworthy: those of R.H. Wright and John Amoore. Keep in mind these theories apply to all types of dogs, not just bomb or narcotic dogs.

R.H. Wright attacked the problem of odor knowing that molecules are not fixed structures, but rather are in constant motion. He further reasoned that substances of similar odor should vibrate at the same frequency. Using a light beam, Wright found that substances which have common vibrational frequencies have similar odors.

John Amoore's theory is based on the probability of seven primary odors from which every known odor is made. Sort of like all colors coming from the three primary colors: red, green and blue.

Amoore contends that each odor has a geometric shape and there is a correspondingly shaped receptor cell in the nose. This allows the cells to receive the appropriate primary odors or primary odor combination. This combination of theories allows for the explanation of why dogs can alert to a substance that is not an explosive or narcotic. Basically, the molecular shape or non-narcotic substance must be roughly similar to the molecular shape or fre-

quency of an explosive or narcotic. Actually, if you're a dog handler, you just call it a false alert.

As stated, there are many theories on what dogs actually smell. If you want to try a discrimination test with your dog, get a bowl of stew. Place the filled bowl in front of the dog and watch the dog pick the meat out of the stew.

When we smell food, it comes to us in a combination of odors, but a dog — as in the case of the stew — breaks that odor down to the basic parts. This is another theory on how dogs discriminate odors and why it is difficult to mask odors from a dog using a cover scent such as coffee or narcotics.

The federal government has been using narcotics dogs for some time. Since 1970, the U.S. Customs Service has used a wide variety of adult dogs of either sex, including mixed breeds. The two primary traits sought are an eager desire to fetch any thrown object and a strong desire to play tug-of-war with a retrieved object. They receive the best care, housing and medical treatment available, for this requires an animal that enjoys its work. No harsh punishment or training methods are used on the dogs. The dogs are used as an aid to the detection of illicit drugs being



*Some agencies are using dogs as part of a SWAT entry team. This one has been used on several actual situations. After the door is taken down and a flash-bang grenade used, then the dog goes in off leash.*

smuggled into the country; they are not used to search persons and are not trained as guard dogs.

The teams consisting of a dog and a handler are assigned to Customs, international mail facilities, airports, cargo docks, terminals and border posts. They screen mail, cargo, baggage ships, aircraft and vehicles. The primary training is conducted at the 225-acre Detector Dog Training Center at Front Royal, Virginia. Customs employs dogs until they are 9 years old. Upon retirement, they may go back to the original owner, become a pet in the household of the handler, or be taken in by another family. There usually is no problem in finding a good home for a retired dog.

As stated earlier, narcotic detecting dogs also work for a reward. No, it's not drugs and they are not addicted to narcotics any more than the bomb dog is to explosives. The narcotics dog works for fun, just like the bomb dog, and his reward is usually the same. Our narcotics dogs work for a pull toy made from a piece of fire hose.

When time is not of the essence, the search can take longer and is not necessarily a life-threatening situation. The narcotics dogs are taken on a directed search, but for the most part our dogs work off the leash. The big difference between a narcotics dog and a bomb dog is the alert the dog gives when he finds what he's supposed to find. The narcotics dog is encouraged to dig out the dope and usually goes at his job with enthusiasm and zeal. There is much wagging of the tail, loud barking and the rending of material, be it leather or nylon. The bomb dog, on the other hand, could precipitate a disaster with such a burst of enthu-

siasm. Instead, he is trained to place his nose gently in the direction of the explosives and to sit. Only when his reward is in the air does the bomb dog exhibit any expression, then it's far away from the suspect package or suitcase.

Of course, there is another type of reward: food. The New York City Bomb Squad, as of the last time I talked to a member, uses a food reward. They use a platoon system for their dogs. The on-duty dogs are fed at opposite times of the day in order to preclude a call right after feeding and a full dog. As I mentioned earlier, I have a second dog who would work for food right after he ate a forty-pound bag of dog food, but most dogs would be slowed down somewhat. This system seems to work well for them, and, when their dogs are working, not only do they sit, but their mouths open automatically.

There are smart dogs and not so smart dogs. The smart dogs, while easier to train, are harder to work, because they constantly use their intelligence to avoid work and, as a result, keep their handlers on their toes. As an example, they read body language as well as any interrogator. They watch your hands, listen to your voice, then put it together to form a response. If the handler develops the habit during training of using the same verbal prompts or hand movement each time he directs the dog to the area of a training aid, the dog can be induced into a false alert just using the verbal and hand movements.

My dog picked up on one of my moves real fast when we were first training together. I had his ball in a pouch on my belt in the front. As I watched him work and as he got closer





*His sensitive nose and awareness will allow him to find anyone waiting in closets or other locations to ambush the SWAT officers. Dennis Scott waits with his dog, Dirk, in the event that they'll be needed.*

to the aid, I would start to move my hand toward the ball. It wasn't long before he started to watch my hand instead of looking for the aid. When my hand was in the area of the ball, he would alert. My trainer fixed that by having me reverse the pouch and wear it behind me, something I still do to this day. With the pouch behind me, I'm much more conscious of the ball. When we train, we hide the aid from the handler. This also precludes him from tipping off the dog.

Foot movement is another tip-off to a smart dog. Stop moving and the dog thinks you must be in the area of what he's supposed to find; thus, he alerts. Another common mistake a new handler can make is to get down slowly to the level of the dog. By this I mean you are directing your dog with your hand and encouraging him with verbal commands. Soon you are only two or three feet from the floor — depending on how big your dog is — and your back is killing you. To direct the dog, you bend over to his level and soon you are conducting the entire search from this position.

The one obvious fault right off the top is the missed area above your head, not to mention the back pain. Believe me, you can conduct an entire search this way and not realize it. I know, because I've done it. The best way to correct such training faults is to train periodically with other handlers who can spot your mistakes.

One of the questions asked of me when I give talks on our bomb squad and my dog is "Will he alert when he is not working?" Most of the time my dog will not alert, unless he

sees the ball. I have not conducted any extensive studies on this subject, but every now and then, I test him when I'm working in our explosives magazine. I might take a cartridge of dynamite and hold it out to him to see if he'll alert. So far, unless he knows he's working and is going to get the ball, he won't alert. In fact he shows little or no interest.

Verbal clues are also a giveaway to a smart dog. Just by voice inflection, you can direct a dog and you can get a false alert. Using the same terms of encouragement each time the aid is approached will produce a false alert as soon as the dog picks up on the verbal clue. Again, this can be corrected by hiding the aid from the handler as well as the dog.

Once you have been accepted into a dog unit, the particular training methods and standard operating procedures of that unit will apply. As I wrote earlier, the units that have been mentioned are usually found in the regular police ranks with full-time police officers as the handlers.

There is one special purpose dog that is generally handled by volunteers, usually reserve police or deputy sheriffs. That is the bloodhound or tracking dog.

These dogs may be used to find a lost child, an escaped criminal or sometimes a piece of evidence. No matter what the call, you can bet most of the time the handler is a reserve officer or deputy who volunteers his or her time to assist regular law enforcement officers with an often time-consuming and manpower-draining search.

When you hear the term, "search and rescue," the word "bloodhound" is almost synonymous, but there are other



*Police cars fitted out for dog work will be well-marked. They have to be readily identified by the public as well as by other policemen. The rear door of the dog car has a solenoid catch. It works off of the transmitter on the handler's gunbelt. When he pushes the button, the dog leaves the car and finds his boss. If the handler is being attacked, the dog will get into the fight. There's not a doubt about whose side he's on — or the eventual outcome!*

dogs that can track also. The German shepherd, when trained for tracking, can be a great search-and-rescue dog. Most of the hunting breeds can be trained to search. One dog on the large side that comes to mind is the trusty Saint Bernard. Any time we hear of a snow rescue, we think of the huge dog with the small cask under his chin. Actually, the last news clip of a rescue I saw on television, German shepherds were being used. There are also plenty of mixed-breed dogs used for tracking that are equally as good as their pedigreed brethren. But the main dog that gets all the attention is the bloodhound. The bloodhound has been bred over the years to strengthen his natural ability to discover articles or people based on scent.

The American Kennel Club conducts testing and awards certificates to AKC-registered dogs that have met certain standards in tracking. This certificate enhances the cred-



ibility of the dog to such an extent that a dog's tracking ability can be accepted as evidence in a court of law.

Does this mean that a dog that is not AKC registered can't hold his own in a search? Of course not. It's the end results that ultimately determine a dog's credibility and careful record keeping will soon establish a dog's ability to track whether he's pedigreed or not.





*Above: The dog unit is growing in favor with many progressive police agencies. Properly established and run, dog units are excellent adjuncts to the regular uniformed patrolman.*



*Everybody likes a friendly dog. And when the dog is well trained and disciplined, he can visit the kids at nursery school as well as run down and hold a burglar — all in one day!*

The main factor in any tracking team's ability to track is the amount of time spent training. Many times they are called upon to aid in a search for someone who is injured or incapable of caring for himself. The efficiency of the tracking dogs is related directly to the expertise of the resuce. This is only brought about (in the case of my department) by thousands of donated hours. Hours and hours are spent in training for that one call, but all the long hours pay off with a successful resuce. By nature, bloodhounds are single-minded dogs. Once onto a scent, they are not easily distracted. They are natural ground sniffers and trackers.

No matter how well trained a dog is, he's still a dog. He will still chase cats, pass gas at the wrong time and hike his leg up on a tree in front of the world. Handlers tend to be like new parents whose child is so precocious you'd think it was born with the ability to read and write. I know some handlers who will convince you their dogs can read, write or even speak. These specially trained dogs can be an effective tool when used correctly; when they enjoy the support of the department and community, they can make a big difference in the local crime index. — *Christopher Weare*



## **CHAPTER SIXTEEN**

# **BOMB SQUADS**



*Technology Be Damned, The Best Tools For This Job  
Are Still Clear Minds, Calm Dispositions  
... And Careful Fingers!*





**I**T IS virtually impossible to remain isolated from the national and international news. With the combined forces of the press, television and radio determined to make us well informed citizens, hardly a day goes by that we are not presented with the latest graphic descriptions of man's injustices to his fellow man.

Because of the damage they cause and the potential for mass injury and death, bombings have become the tool of the political dissident and criminal elements of the world. And because they are so spectacular, they receive front page news coverage and television prime news times. This cycle repeats itself over and over, each feeding off the other. Obviously, there are people who would disagree with this over-simplified view of why the bomb has become a popular tool, but we all have seen what the press can do with a simple story.

As long as there are bombers, there has to be someone who, at times, will risk his or her life to stop them. In some cities, they may be part of the fire department, while in others it's the police department or sheriff's department.

Some small towns and sparsely populated parts of the country depend upon the local U.S. Army EOD (explosive ordnance disposal) unit. The Army does this under

federal authority in the continental United States. Since all branches of the Armed Forces have some form of EOD unit, they may assist local authorities on occasion. It may be called the EOD unit, the Hazardous Devices Squad or just simply the Bomb Squad.

The term, "bombsquad," conjures up the typical Hollywood stereotype. There he is, sweat pouring down his face, three different colored wires in his hands connected to a ticking clock, a battery and several pounds of dynamite. The second hand is approaching the twelve o'clock position, our hero grits his teeth, grasps his wire cutters, while invoking some arcane saying such as, "Cut blue before red and you'll end up dead." With trembling hand, he cuts the yellow wire and saves the world.

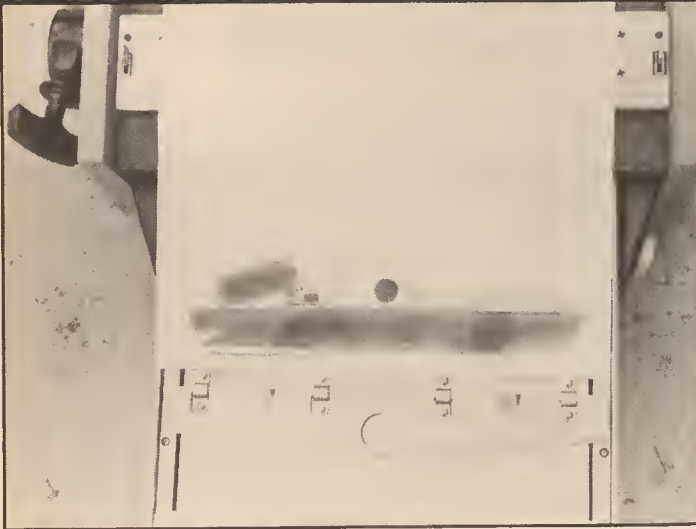
Faced with the same situation, today's modern bomb technician might handle it a little differently. Once the premises are cleared, he or she might try to render the bomb safe or neutralize it, but otherwise, if it's a time bomb and the time set on the bomb is close to detonation, you may be making a claim on your property insurance. That's not to say we don't attempt to render devices safe; it's just that we've got more respect for human life—especially ours—over property.

The first decision we have to make is who do we want on the bomb squad. We need some criteria by which to judge our prospective members. For instance, is it necessary to have been in the military and have an EOD background? Not at all. Prior experience is not necessary, since we will train our technicians to handle the IED (improvised explosive device) as a civilian bomb technician. In fact, prior training may hinder, if it is contrary to present methods. Unlike the movies, which depict our technician as a loner, our modern technician must be a team player. There is no



*Facing page: The Safeco bomb suit is made in Canada and widely used by bomb squads throughout the Free World. Above, left and below: Tissue box contains an explosive device of unknown type. Professional bomb techs will use a portable X-ray to get an inside look.*





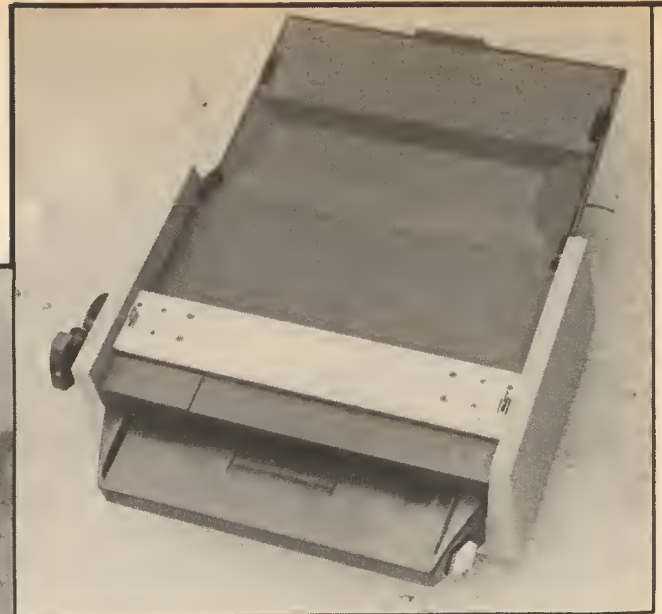
place for the ego-tripper on the bomb squad. We all share skills and information and generally work in at least a two-person team.

The sex of the bomb squad member doesn't make any difference. There are female bomb technicians in the armed services and we have a female technician on our own squad. They can handle the job as well as their male counterparts.

Training is the key word. The military experts undergo a six-month-plus training period conducted primarily at Indian Head, Maryland. There, the military technician must learn the characteristics of all the military munitions presently in use by the United States as well as NATO and Eastern Bloc countries. Fortunately, most of this information is contained in manuals and books. The civilian counterpart must deal with "improvised explosive devices." These are limited only by the imagination of the builder and rarely is the technician presented with the details of the device and how to render it safe prior to attacking the device. But there is a formal school for the police bomb technician where he or she can get a basic education in the improvised explosive device.

The basic training is given at the United States Army's Redstone Arsenal, which is located in Huntsville, Alabama. Here a small corps of retired and active Army EOD technicians teach new bomb technicians their stuff. This is under the auspices of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Bomb Data Center and the Army. Starting with the basics of electricity and explosives, they take the new bomb technician all the way up to hand entry of a device. While this may all be practice, it doesn't take much to get wrapped up in the scenario and the increased heart rate and sweat are real.

During this school, the student learns the real meaning



*Above: After the portable X-ray unit on the previous page is used to take a photo of the device, the Polaroid film must be developed. This device is not much larger than a briefcase, but lets the bomb tech get a look inside within seconds. Left: Atop the processing unit, the finished Polaroid shot is displayed. The circuitry of the explosive device must be interpreted by an experienced professional.*

of team work and is reminded constantly of what one mistake can do to him and his partner. The student is presented with every conceivable situation, ranging from airplanes to hospitals. Once graduated from Redstone, the student returns to his unit where he will build up his expertise with hands-on real-life situations. There are students who attend the school who, once they return to their departments, *are* the bomb squad!

Returning to the local police department, the recent graduate is the resident expert. He builds up experience fast, since every call is his. For the most part, even technicians from small departments soon learn where the nearest military EOD unit is or the nearest bomb squad and liaisons are quickly established. This is not a job you learn by trial and error, unless it's done at great distances from the blast site.

For those officers whose job it may be to investigate bombings, a second school is offered by a federal agency. This school, conducted at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco, Georgia, is offered by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the International Association of Bomb Technicians and Investigators or FLETC, ATF and IABTI, respectively. This is a post-blast investigation class and deals with the investigation of bombing crime scenes.

Here it is not paramount that the attending officer be a





*When it is apparent that the device can be made safe by destroying the wiring of the circuit at a particular point, a dearmer may be used. Above: The breech end of a standard dearmer. This is an electrically-fired gun that launches a variety of projectiles at high velocity into the device. This is done in order to cut the wiring of the bomb. In right photo, dearmer is wired for remote firing.*



bomb technician, but a solid understanding of explosives may be necessary to reach an intelligent conclusion to an investigation. The student is taken step by step through a major bombing investigation. The instructors are ATF agents and working technicians drawn from the ranks of IABTI. Starting with basic techniques, the students work up a real case using real information and a real bombing. The class is broken down to three teams of ten people per team. Each team has its own bomb scene to investigate on the demolition range. The practical application not only includes an actual bombing in which the students have to process the entire crime scene, but actual suspects that can be interviewed. The suspects are professional role players who follow a given script.

The students must get search warrants, establish case files and subpoena records. The school also maintains several outstanding static displays that acquaint the officer with such diverse items as the equipment and dangers of a PCP lab to the dangers of a clandestine fireworks factory.

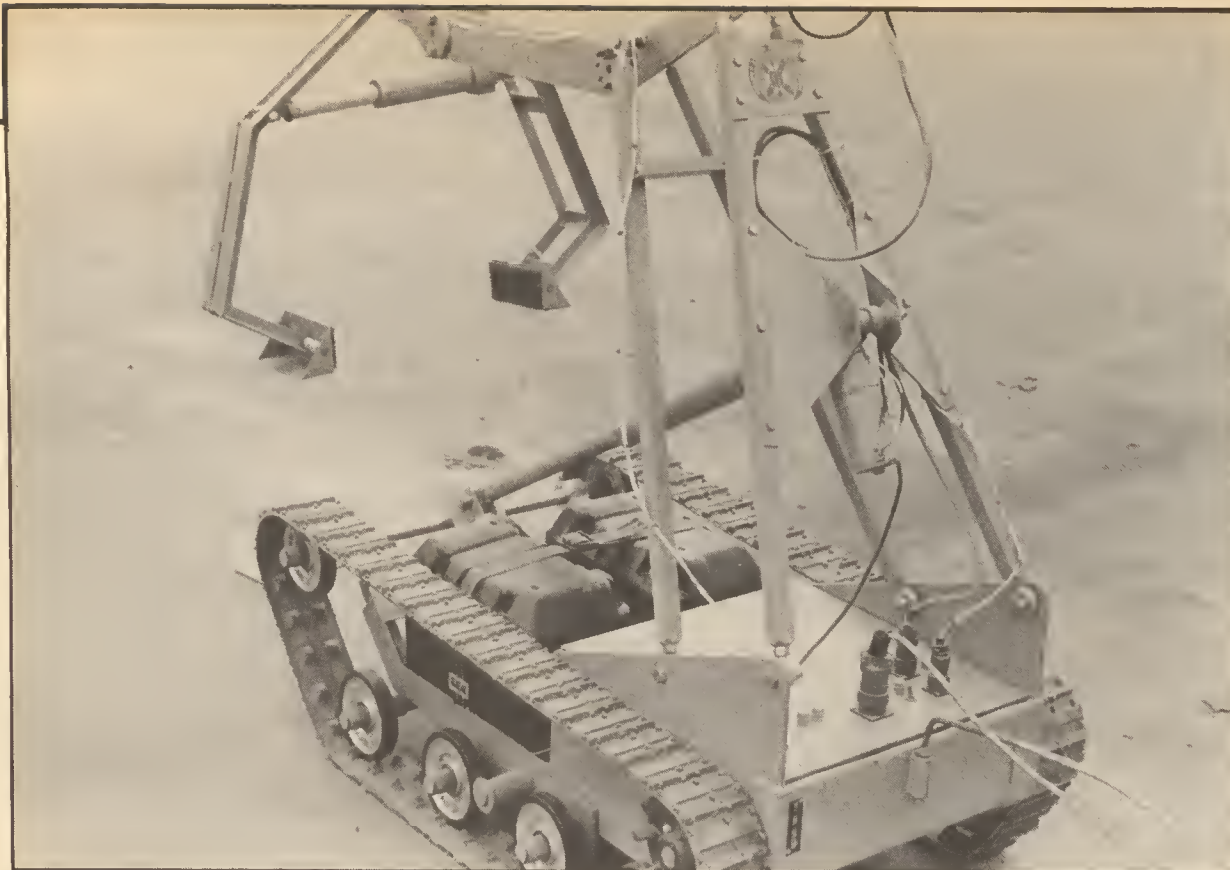
Each display is discussed as a group and even those investigators who have been in the field can learn from these open discussions. Here again, new officers from a large department will get plenty of experience working with senior investigators, but officers from a small department may well find themselves investigating bombings on their own from the start.

Training with the equipment is important—everyone has to know how to use it and maintain it. Equipment in the EOD field has developed at a phenomenal rate. Like medicine and the clothing industry, the EOD technician has benefited from the space race. New materials for bomb suits, electronic monitoring devices, communication systems, television cameras and fiber optics all have been developed in the last decade and have found a place in the modern bomb squad.

Bomb suit development, for instance, was largely due to the British Army EOD units in Northern Ireland. Facing daily call-outs on IEDs, the EOD units were in desperate need of some type of equipment that could give them a measure of safety while working on the devices left about by the IRA. Today, most large metropolitan police bomb squads have at least one bomb suit.

Our squad has two Safeco bomb suits manufactured in Canada. Made of Kevlar and ballistic material, the suit offers a measure of protection from shrapnel and blast shock wave. The only part of your body that is not protected are your hands. Unfortunately there is no easy way to work on a device without exposing your hands. In order for a pair of gloves to give you any measure of protection, they would be so bulky that they would take away any sense of touch you have. This sense of touch is critical at times when rendering safe a device. The suit is light enough—a shade over fifty pounds—to allow the operator to walk around easily and to bend down and get up.

I have crawled in and out of windows and under cars in our bomb suits without too much trouble. In the summer, it is wise to take frequent breaks, since the heat and sweat will eventually become uncomfortable. This is when it's nice to have two suits; two technicians can alternate turns if it's a long, drawn-out operation.



*The tracked robot moves into position. If the bomb can't be blown and must be moved, this contraption can do it for you. Fitted with a TV camera and a distant monitor, the robot is controlled by an operator via a joystick in the control box. The robot can lift considerable weight and will turn in its own length.*

The term "robot" always brings to mind something like R2D2 in *Star Wars* or C3PO from the same movie. For the most part, robots used in bomb work are four- to six-wheeled vehicles with a remotely controlled arm and a television camera to allow the operator to direct it. There are also models on the market that use tracks just like those on a tank.

We use the Pedsco RMI, another piece of Canadian EOD equipment that we find quite satisfactory for all our needs. It has six pneumatic tires, a remote-controlled claw and a television camera. The main unit is run by battery, as is the television camera and monitor. The outstanding feature of the robot is the availability of spare parts locally and our communications technicians can work on all of the components. This is important, if you are faced with a long repair delay, because you have to ship the unit back to the manufacturer or wait for a repairman to come to you. Of course, the bottom line is still going to be the price of the unit and how the department will budget for the unit.

The robot is easy to use once one gets over the lack of depth perception that only one camera gives. Everyone on our squad practices with the robot, as they do with all our other equipment. We don't assign one person on the squad to run a piece of equipment exclusively, because if that person was not available, the equipment would be unusable. There are always people who excel at operating certain types of equipment, be it a computer or a robot, and whenever possible, we use these people. The robot is not a total solution, but it can be used in many situations instead of a

technician. If you come from a small unit and can't afford a robot, the next best thing is a long rope.

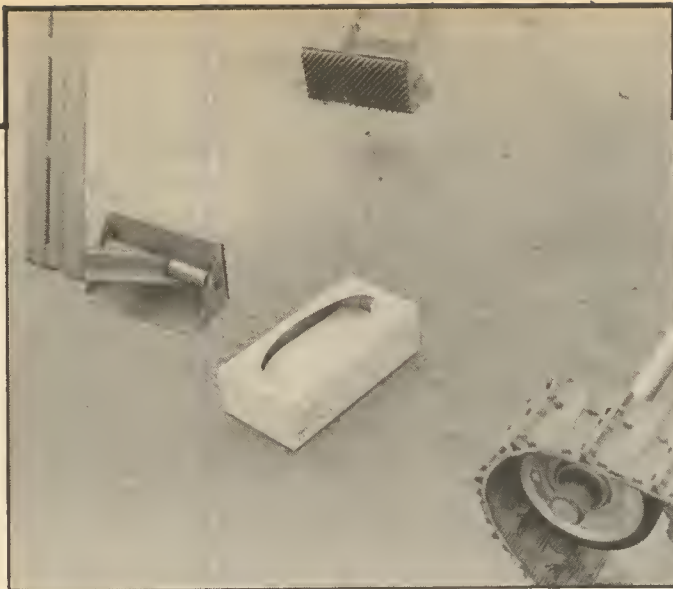
"Jerkus remotus" is a time-tested method that's been around since the inception of the modern bomb squad. A technician with a good understanding of knots and pulley systems can move anything. The only limit is the strength of the line and the anchor points. It's even possible to move objects around corners and change directions, using ropes. This is one method that really demands practice and skill.

One of the other tools we use on a regular basis is a portable X-ray unit. Called the Inspector and manufactured by Golden, the unit runs on its own batteries and uses Polaroid X-ray film. We can X-ray a suspicious package and thirty seconds later have an X-ray to study. A lot of training days are spent in X-ray interpretation.

Once the device has been rendered safe or it has been determined we can move it from its present location to an area that can sustain an explosion, we have to have a means of transporting it to this area. Most bomb squads have a bomb transporter that is spherical in shape and totally contains a blast should the device function. This is nice to have in an area of multi-story buildings where even a directed blast could cause damage or injury.

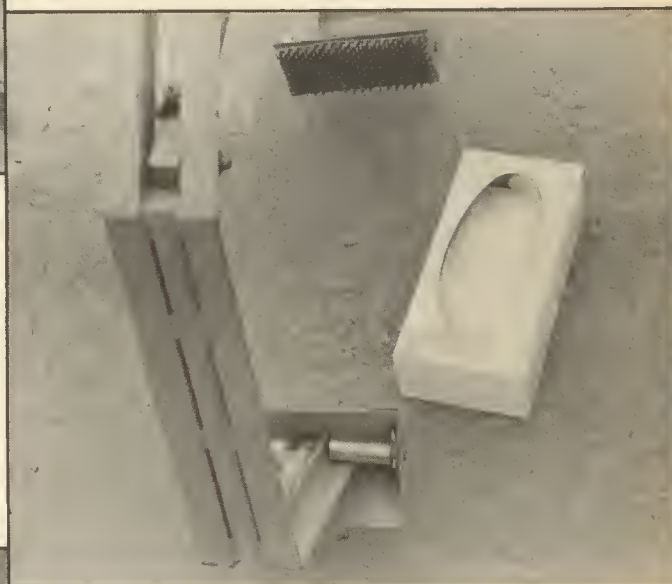
The more common type of bomb transporter consists of a cylinder or several cylinders, one inside the other, with an air space between. The cylinders direct the blast upward much like a large mortar. Another transporter that operates on the same principle has the bottom as well as the top open. The device or explosives are suspended in a net in



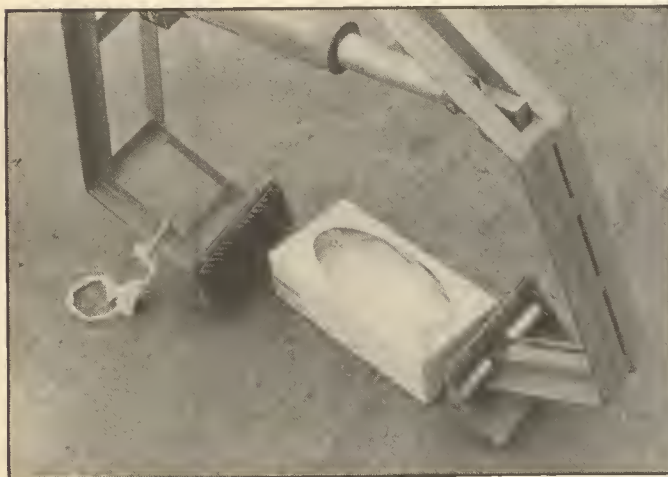


*The series of photos on this page read from the top to the bottom and show the robot in operation. The robot approaches the device in the first photo and the..*

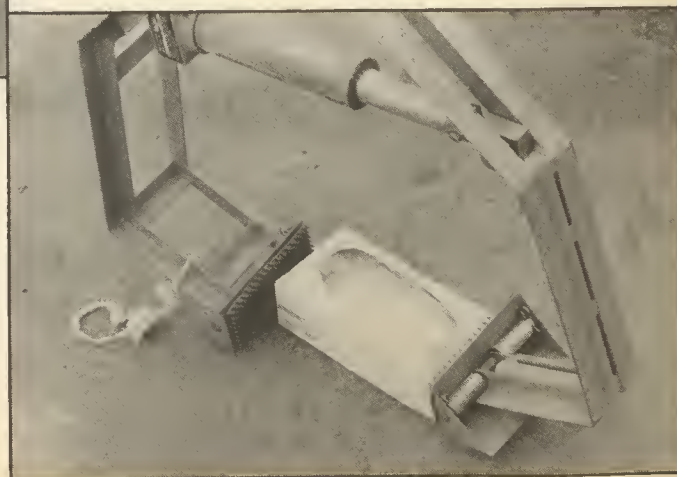
*...operator realizes that he has gone a bit too far. He moves the entire robot back about three inches. This is not something that has to be rushed, so he takes...*

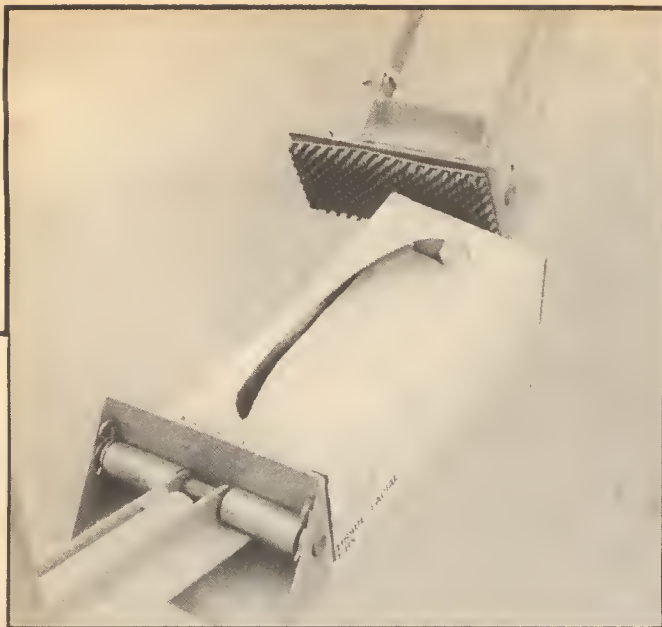


*...enough time to be sure that the rubber faces of the lifting jaws are properly positioned. Then he eases them into contact with the tissue box bomb. This one...*

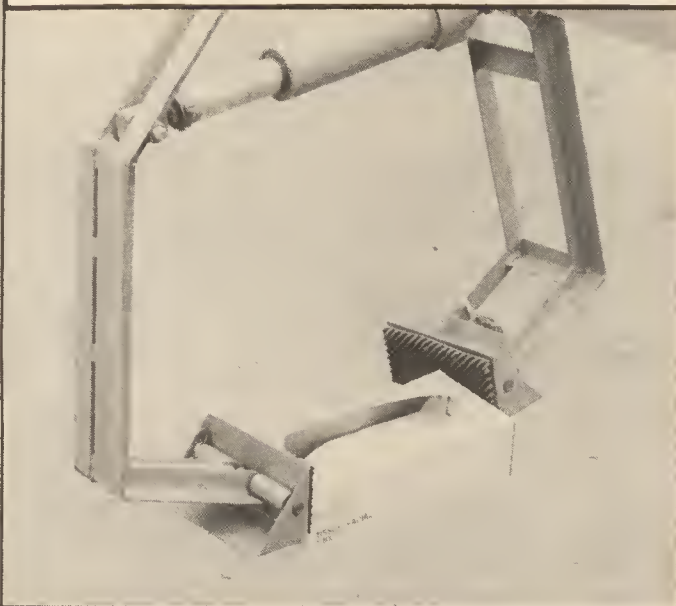


*...is really tricky since the box is so flimsy. Watching the TV monitor from a hundred yards away, the bomb tech has a distorted view. He closes the jaws carefully,*

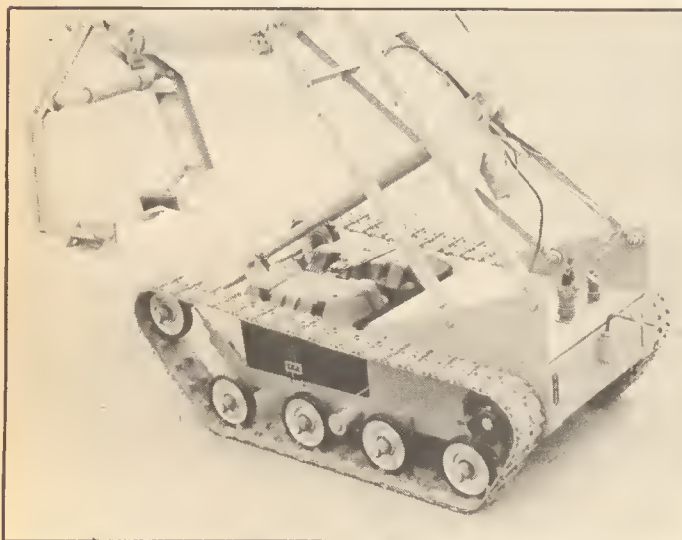




*Closing the jaws is the really tricky part, since box is so fragile that too much inward pressure will crush the device; not enough won't hold it securely. But...*



*...it looks like experience pays. The box is held gently between the rubber-faced jaws of the robot's arms. Now the robot can be maneuvered away. First, the robot...*



*...picks the bomb straight up and clear of any adjacent surfaces. Then the operator drives the robot, by remote control, to a safe spot to destroy or disarm the bomb.*

the center of the cylinder. If the device functions, the blast is directed up and down. Except for the closed container, these all operate in the same way. The object is to direct the blast upward and not allow it to spread in all directions.

Traffic control is important when transporting a device through any metropolitan area. Tall buildings have to be avoided so that a functioned device doesn't attain some measure of success for the bomber and leave the bomb squad somewhat chagrined.

There are other pieces of specialized equipment such as

fiber optics, electronic stethoscopes and such, but to list all the equipment currently on the market would make this chapter into a full-length sales catalog. Most of the time we use a sharp knife or a scalpel; once in a while, even a screwdriver and a pair of pliers.

Unlike the military EOD units that have manuals that tell them how to disarm military munitions, the civilian bomb squad collects "how-to" books. These books can be seen at the large Saturday morning swap meets around the country and local gun shows. There are even several commercial concerns that specialize in this type of book. Many of the cases we see each year start with these so-called clandestine books and end up tragically with a young person maimed for life or dead. The other result is a large amount of property damage. It's unfortunate that these books find their way into the hands of young, impressionable teenagers, who do not have the common sense or the expertise to deal with explosives. Some of the information in these books is taken from older books and, as such, the theories or laboratory procedures may be outdated or dangerous. One omitted sentence during copying could lead to an explosion, especially if it is a critical part of an experiment that has been omitted.

The modern bomb squad not only must face the dangers of explosives, but we also teach. In our own agency, we conduct yearly training for all local police and fire agencies, as well as teach at the sheriff's academy. These classes are offered to aid us as much as the departments,



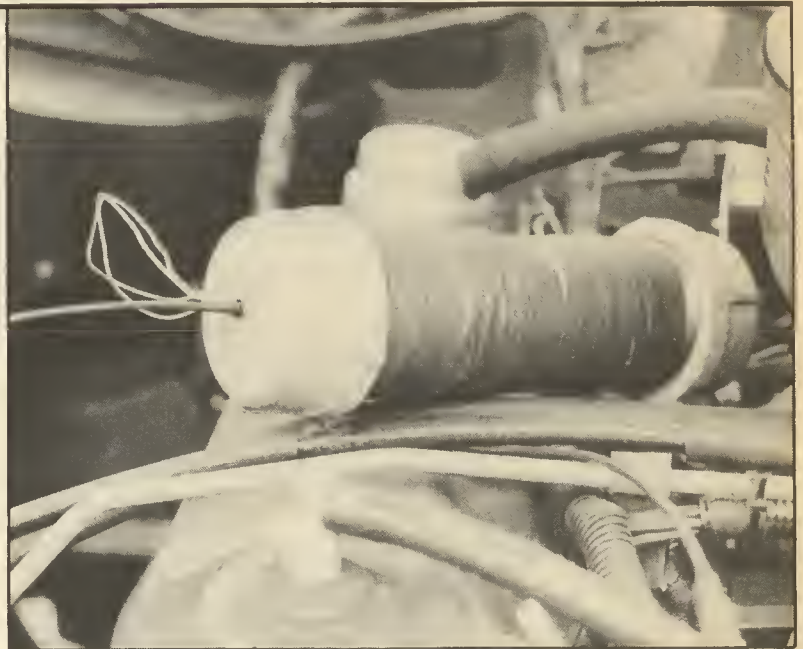
since they outline what to do in the event of found explosives or an explosion. Many times a successful investigation hinges on what the officer first responding to a bombing does when he arrives on the scene. We also offer classes to SWAT personnel on the use of explosives and explosive recognition.

The members of a bomb squad must be good policemen; the bottom line is all bombings are criminal, and eventually must be investigated. They also must have an interest in all the ancillary subjects that encompass the bomber's world;

not only electronics and explosive principles, but political factions and their particular methods of making bombs. At the same time, they must keep up with the latest developments in explosives and blasting techniques in order to be able to recognize explosive products when they are found in the community.

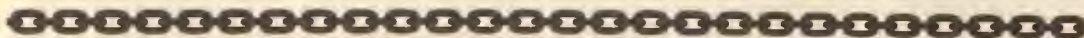
Going back to Hollywood movies where policemen never write reports, the glamour of the bomb squad pales in the real world of reports, court and research. — *Christophe Weare*

*In law enforcement hazardous devices work, the most common device encountered is the pipe bomb. Seen here atop a truck engine, the pipe bomb is not difficult to build. For that reason, policemen often see them. In the final analysis, the most effective tool that the bomb technician will use is simply those versatile human hands. And lots of experience.*

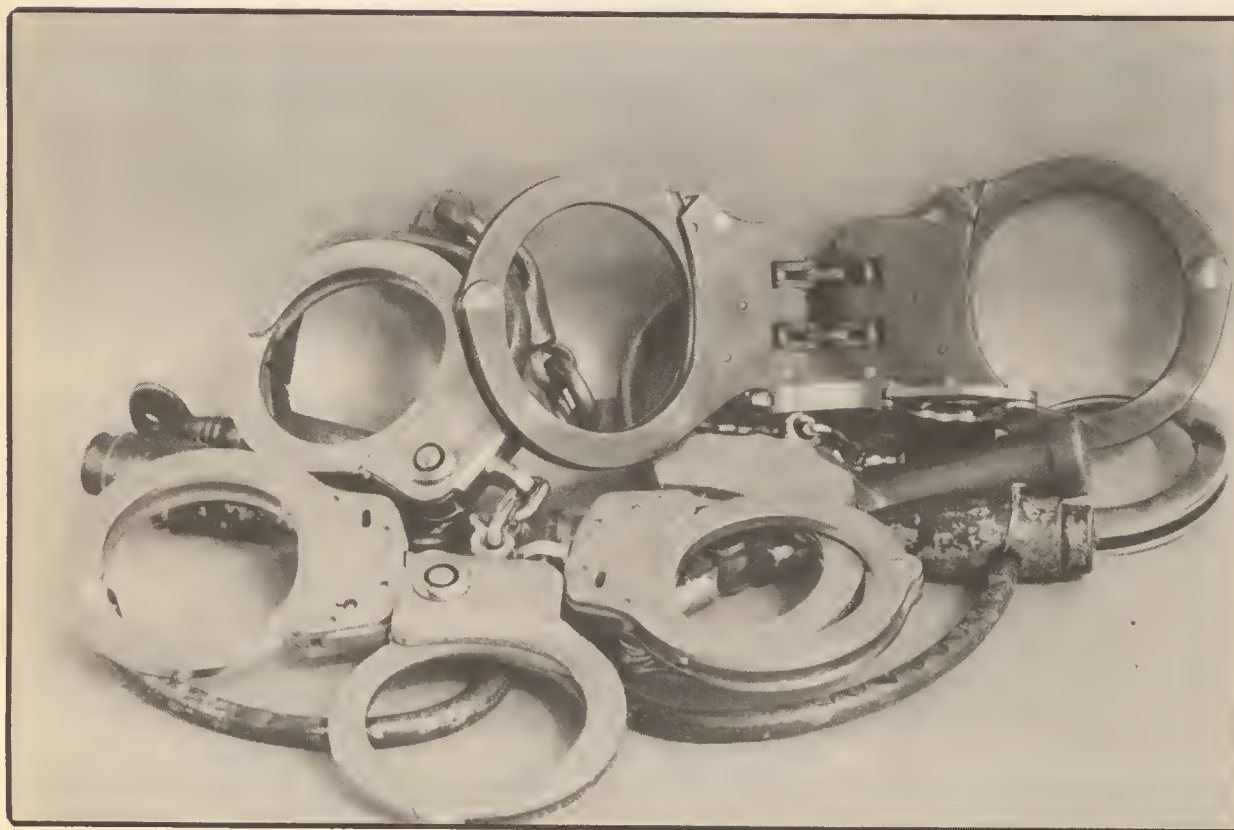
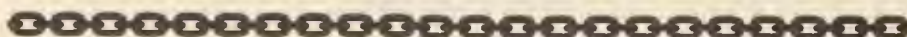




## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN.....



# HANDLING HANDCUFFS



*Not As Easy As It Looks, Says This  
Veteran Military Police Officer*



**G**YVES, CHECKBOLTS, belbowes, nippers and gibbets! Have any idea what they are? No? Well, here's a clue: shackles, manacles and chains! That clears it up for you, doesn't it? Well, maybe or maybe not.

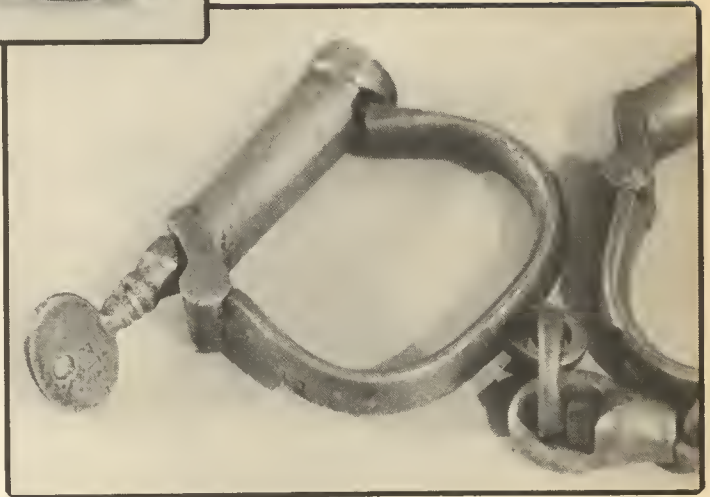
Unless you're a serious student of the history of re-

straints or a knowledgeable locksmith, you probably didn't have the slightest idea what these terms meant until you read the clue and recognized some of the words (shackles, manacles, chains). Then you probably got the idea that they had something to do with what this chapter is going to cover: the use of restraints in police work.





Above: Old and new contrasted. The hinged cuffs are a new item on the scene, but the old "bottle cuffs" are long since out of production. As recently as early in the 1970s, they were used by deputies in the prisoner transportation detail of Los Angeles County's Sheriff's Department. Right: These old handcuffs were actually screwed shut with the key as shown. Because of their rounded edges, they're more comfortable than the new.



About ten years ago, as a military police officer in the U.S. Marine Corps, I attended the United States Army's Military Police Officers Advance Course at Fort McClellan, Alabama. While there, I toured the Military Police Museum which contained historical displays dating back to the beginning of the Army's MP Corps.

I had finished browsing through the exhibits and was on my way out when I noticed an elaborately decorative, hand-lettered display near the exit. When I examined it closer it listed, from antiquity, the duties of the provost marshal. (The provost marshal is the staff officer responsible to the commander for the law enforcement mission on a military installation and is the equivalent of the chief of police in a civilian city or town.)

The text of the display read as follows: "The Provost Marshal hath the charge of all manner of tortures as gyves, shackles, bolts, chains, belbowes, manacles, whips and the like and may by his ministers use them, either in the case of judgement of commandment from a Martial Court or otherwise upon unruliness at his own discretion.

"He is by his officers to see all places of Execution prepared and furnished with engines fitting to the judgement, whether it be gallows, gibbet, scaffolds, pillories, stocks, or strappadoes, or any other engine which is set up for terror and affright to such as behold it. — Five Decades of Epistles of Warre"

The things that struck me right off after reading this were just how much responsibility and authority had really been taken away from the military officers of the day and, secondly, just what the devil did all those odd sounding words mean? (I aspired to become a U.S. Marine Corps provost marshal and wanted to make damned sure I had all the proper and necessary equipment for the job.) Well, after

some research, I learned that most of what they referred to was what I had known as good old-fashioned handcuffs or hand irons.

History indicates that restraints probably were used first by ancient military forces to secure prisoners of war who were destined to become slaves. Restraints also were used during medieval times for the purpose of restraining a subject to "any other engine which is set up for terror and affright to such as behold it." The primary purpose of those engines was torture and restraints played a big part in early man's inhumanity to man.

In most cases, these early restraining devices were nothing more sophisticated than a length of crudely fashioned chain accompanied by a primitive locking device. They were most always applied around the wrist or ankles of the individual and locked or forged shut by the local blacksmith. These early devices, although primitively constructed, were capable of restricting movement sufficiently that the captive could be transported to the slave market or tortured in good order.

Records describe a variety of restraints which were used in early times and most of these are still defined in the dictionary of today. Of these, the more commonly used was the bilbo or belbowes. The bilbo was a long bar of iron with sliding shackles used to confine the feet of a prisoner and were used a great deal, especially on board the old slave ships. The early restraints were all basically some variation of hand irons or chains which were forged to the individual or locked, utilizing a separate locking device to hold the restraint securely to either the individual or some sturdy object. These were the forerunners of modern restraints.

The first major improvement in restraining devices came



*Left: Except for thumb cuffs, you can likely find all of the others in active service around the country. As soon as a new cuff is made, someone figures it out.*



*Above: The Smith & Wesson high security cuffs with a special large-loop Martin chain made especially for use with them. This is a good rig for lengthy time periods.*

when the lock was incorporated in the device itself, thus making the restraint a self-contained unit. These early models had their drawbacks. They were not capable of being adjusted to fit a variety of wrist sizes, requiring them to be manufactured in a several wrist sizes. They also had to be unlocked prior to being applied. This made them difficult to put on an uncooperative subject.

These problems were solved mostly when the modern handcuff was patented in the early 1900s by a man named George Carney. They were first manufactured by the Peerless Handcuff Company and later by Smith & Wesson; both of these companies continue to manufacture them today. The basic design of this handcuff, with minor modifications, has remained virtually unchanged since its origin. Time-tested and proven effective for what they were designed for, they are relatively easy to apply and, in most cases, will do the job of temporarily restraining a suspect for short-distance transportation to be booked. There are restraints in use in many other professions such as the medical use of straight jackets. These types of restraints are referred to as "soft restraints" and are used generally for restraining an emotionally disturbed individual.

Soft restraints occasionally have some application in law enforcement, but, generally speaking, police restraints are divided into two categories. The first category of re-

straints is used in arrests at the scene or on the street. The second variety is used in the transportation of prisoners.

The subject of an arrest doesn't always cooperate fully with the officer who is about to deprive him of his liberty and may not go along peaceably. When using restraints in police work, we would like to achieve some of the same ends as the medical profession, i.e., the safe, injury-free restraint of an arrestee, and the prevention of his escape. However, of equal or more important concern, is the safety of the officer responsible for taking the culprit off the street.

Restraint encounters by cops occur on the street and involve the first category of restraints: handcuffs. The second category of police restraining devices include waist

*Below: The diminutive thumb cuff worked by means of pressure against the thumb behind the big joint of the thumb. They had to be tight in order to work at all.*



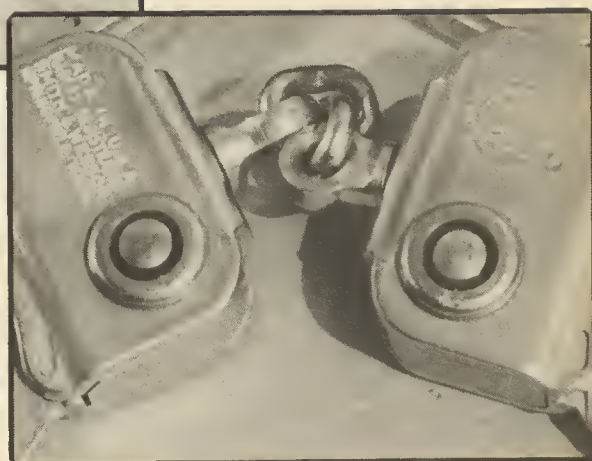
*Below: This is why thumb cuffs aren't used as much as they once were. Even applied correctly, they can be removed by lots of thick-fingered people as shown here.*







*Above: The new hinge cuffs are better, because they restrict the hands from working together most of the time. They are seen here with the older handcuffs using a three-link chain to connect the two halves of the set.*



*While most of the handcuffs work with the same key, the new high-security models use a special key to make them harder to pick. Despite the difficulties involved, prisoners have found ways to pick this cuff's mechanism.*

chains, leg or ankle irons and Martin chains. These are used for the transportation of prisoners. This type of restraint is used when a higher degree of restraint is required for security purposes and is applied when transporting prisoners in and around a jurisdiction or from one jurisdiction to another. However, in situations involving multiple arrests, where prior planning can be done, these restraints can be used also in street situations. Let's take a closer look at these restraining devices.

If you look at the duty belt worn by most cops in the United States and probably those in most foreign countries, you will see secured to it in one manner or another a set of restraining devices or handcuffs. These cuffs will not be too far removed from the original design of 1900s. Time-tested and proven efficient, they continue to serve well in the temporary restraint of individuals brought into custody.

Efforts to build a better mousetrap have not drastically changed the basic design of the handcuff. However, throughout the years, there have been some modifications and variations of handcuffs for special purposes.

One such change was the thumb cuff. This device functioned basically the same as the swing-shut style of regular handcuffs, but was smaller and more compact. They were designed to be carried by investigators, because they were less bulky and were easier to carry in plain clothes. They could also be carried by the street cop as a back-up set. There was, however, one drawback in these cuffs. Because they were small by design, a person with small hands and virtually no joint of the thumb could get free of them by forcing the cuff off the thumb. Thumb cuffs are still around, but are not as widely used as the regular handcuffs.

Another useful special-purpose restraint was the Flex Cuff which was a complete departure from the standard metal handcuff. No more than a piece of hard flexible plastic, it was used originally by telephone companies to secure wires in groups or to secure cables to fixed locations. These

restraints were lightweight and large quantities could be carried in cases where multiple arrests were anticipated. Once applied, they had to be cut off and the risk of injury to the suspect if left on for long periods of time increased. They are not capable of being double-locked and, once applied, can be tightened either by accident in the process of transporting the prisoner or on purpose by the suspect who is contemplating a civil suit for brutality.

Another modification to the basic handcuff design came in the form of a hinged rather than chain-connected bracelet. This gave the subject less freedom of movement once the cuffs were on and made it somewhat easier to apply the cuff, as the bracelets were kept relatively still by the hinged connection.

Other changes involved the use of aluminum alloy to manufacture a lightweight set of handcuffs in the same basic design. The idea was to provide a lighter cuff to lessen the weight load of the officer.

Smith & Wesson's addition to the basic line of handcuffs resulted in the Model 94 high-security cuffs. The Model 94 included a round lock which required a tubular-shaped key to open. This made them somewhat harder to pick, and, as a result, they are used in combination with other restraints to transport prisoners.



*No matter how well they are designed, handcuffs need to be applied correctly. Left: Behind the back is the best location and always with the keyholes away from those idle hands. Below: Two types of double-locks on modern handcuffs. Cuffs on the left have the newer slot lock.*



Handcuffs can be applied in a variety of ways and the techniques involved vary greatly from one situation to another. However, in general, there are a few things that will make their application safer for the officer. First of all, the cuffs should, if at all possible, be applied to the subject with his hands in the back. Second, the keyways should be facing up so that they are not accessible to the prisoner. This also makes it easier for the officer to lock and unlock the cuffs. Third, the cuffs should always be double-locked to prevent them from closing tighter and to make picking them harder. Last, the prisoner should be kept under observation in case he attempts to pick his way free of them. Because he is cuffed doesn't mean he will stay that way!

There are deficiencies in the basic handcuff as a restraining device. Handcuffs can be picked, if left on a subject without constant visual contact. Most handcuffs can be picked or gotten free from quite easily by the most unskilled novice, if left to his own devices unobserved and unsupervised for any length of time. This fact is widely known among most law enforcement officers, especially those involved in the transportation of prisoners. Throughout the country there are many horror stories concerning the loss of prisoners, because of an officer's false confidence in his handcuffs.

These incidents are comparable to the one that occurred at California's Correctional Training Facility at Soledad, during May 1968. Thirty-two disciplinary cases were being transferred to a higher security institution. They were placed on a bus specially equipped for the purpose of transporting prisoners. They were placed in handcuffs which were the standard lightweight aluminum alloy type. As the prisoners were unloaded from the bus — much to the transportation officer's surprise — each deposited his disassembled handcuffs at the exit door.

The bus was searched and no tool or device was found to explain how this was accomplished. The prisoners then were placed in the standard stainless steel cuffs and the same thing happened again. Investigation of the incident

disclosed that the technique used by the prisoners was quite simple. By one man placing the single ratchet arm of his handcuffs into the double supporting arm of his neighbor and twisting, the double portion off the cuff would separate and break at the rivet point.

The first mechanical defense against picking a set of handcuffs is the double-lock system which is installed in all handcuffs. Once the double lock is set by depressing the small inset pin, the locking mechanism becomes that much more difficult to slip. However, this mechanism can be defeated, if the handcuffs are not put on properly with the double-locking mechanism facing up. The technique is quite simple and all that is involved is to give the cuff a sharp rap on a hard object to drive the double-locking pin to the single-lock position. Once this is done, it's a simple

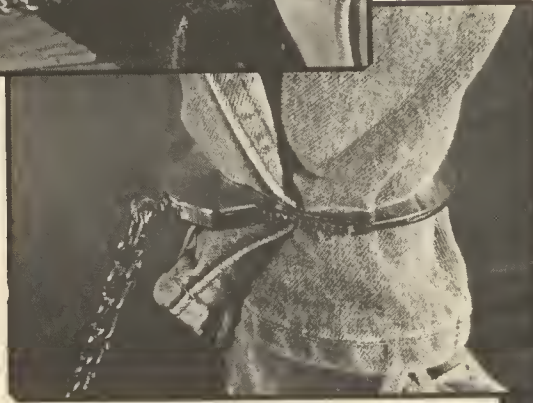


*Handcuffs just don't restrain people for very long and that is particularly true of prisoners experienced in the prison system. They have had plenty of time to figure out ways to escape. Cuffs just slow them down a bit.*





*Leg irons are just big handcuffs with a longer chain. They allow the prisoner to walk, but not run. In the middle picture we see a common error in using leg irons. The trouser leg should not be gathered up as shown. The trousers can be pulled up and the irons are too loose. Bottom picture shows the irons applied correctly. Like cuffs, the keyholes must be away from the hands.*



matter to slip the single lock with a thin, rigid shim.

These are just a few techniques used to open restraints. They all were learned from prisoners who have the time to develop the ways and means to defeat restraints. The wise cop has learned from them and is not overconfident when using restraints, keeping constant vigil, as the situation dictates.

The use of handcuffs, especially in the field, provides the officer with an expeditious but not a fail-safe method of controlling a suspect. When a higher degree of security is necessary, the second line of restraints is used. Restraints in this category are designed to provide immobility and involve restricting the legs and arms of the suspect. Martin chains, waist chains and leg irons all are typical examples. Their primary use is in the transportation of prisoners, but as mentioned before, they can be employed in the field when multiple arrests, or a particularly dangerous suspect or escape risk is anticipated.

Leg irons resemble large handcuffs and their design is exactly the same, except the bracelet is larger and the chain that connects them is longer. This larger cuff and longer chain allow the bracelet to be applied to the ankle and inhibits movement by the chain's length. When applying leg irons, they should be attached around the ankle and not include the trouser leg. Cuffing over the trouser leg will allow the trousers to be pulled out by the suspect later, making the bracelet larger and may afford the individual an opportunity to slip his leg out. When applied, the key ways

of the bracelet should be turned toward the ground, making it difficult to get at.

Martin chains are no more than a length of substantial chain with a special link for inserting a set of handcuffs, most often the S&W Model 94. The chain is wrapped



*Another view of the Martin chain and the new Smith & Wesson high security handcuffs. If you suspect that an inmate is planning to slip this system, then put it on to the rear and slow him down for a longer time period.*



*Above: The waist chain is just a section of chain with a handcuff welded into each side as shown. Secured to the rear with a padlock, it keeps the hands well apart.*

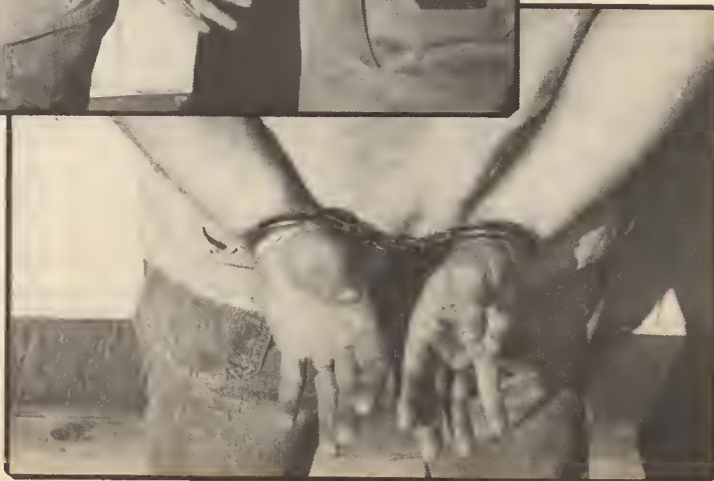
around the prisoner's waist, he is handcuffed in the front or the rear with the key ways facing away and inaccessible to the prisoner. This can be augmented with a pair of leg irons to further restrict the prisoner's movements.

Waist chains consist of a length of what resembles a large choke chain used on dogs. The handcuffs are two separate bracelets attached to the chain. When applied, the chain goes around the waist and is fastened with a lock. The hands then are cuffed to the sides. As with Martin chains, leg irons also can be used with waist chains.

When applying restraint, no matter what type it may be, the technique involved is just as important as the type of restraint being used. In all cases, officer safety is of paramount importance. Improper application of restraints can and often does result in injury to the subject and a possible lawsuit against the officer for brutality. Law enforcement agencies most always have a specific policy written or stated as to when, where and what kind of restraints will be used by the officers. This policy normally is based on knowledge gained through the experiences of the agency and that gained from information shared with other agencies. A new officer is well advised to learn early on in his career what that policy is and should abide by it.



*These photos show the handcuffs going on. There are a number of techniques of applying handcuffs and the one shown here is used when the subject is cooperating with the arresting officer. When he isn't, then anything goes! In this technique, the handcuffs end up positioned in an approved manner and the hands are back to back. That tends to position them so they cannot work in concert.*





Restraining devices constitute a valuable tool available to the officer in performing his job. But remember, they are not foolproof and some prisoners can pick them as fast as they can be applied.

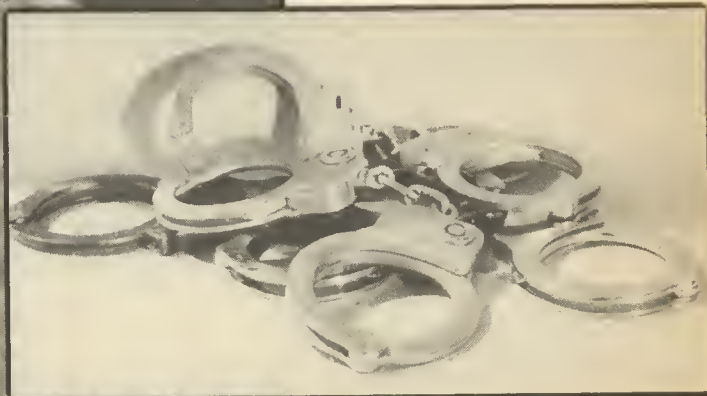
The techniques for applying restraints usually are taught first in the basic academy by proficient instructors who have years of experience or expertise in this area. Once the basic technique is learned, it should be practiced on a regular basis in order to maintain proficiency. A truly pro-

fessional officer stays abreast of any changes in the technique required to use the tools of his profession. Restraints, although they have been around for a long time and may seem simple, require that same dedication in order to stay one step ahead of the bad guys.

A seasoned officer once told me that "the road to hell is paved with the bones of officers who failed to maintain control of a suspect!" I firmly believe that wisdom and consider it advice to survive by. — *Joe Boyd*



*Indeed, he is a surly-looking brute. Since Robert Redford was not available to pose, it was necessary to use someone as a model. Author Joe Boyd got volunteered and here he's all trussed up befitting his simulated status as prisoner Adam Henry. Learning about the capabilities and limits of restraints is necessary for a fully trained police officer.*





## **CHAPTER EIGHTEEN**

*Crime And Crooks Hide In The Dark.*

*That's Why Experienced Cops Prize Their...*

# **FLASHLIGHTS, PLAIN AND FANCY**

*This is a Streamlight in the BEAM mount. It will flood the area into which the SWAT officer will fire with incredibly bright light. They are available for a variety of guns commonly used by entry personnel.*





ONE OF the most important pieces of equipment a policeman may have to purchase is a flashlight. Some of the larger departments provide rechargeable flashlights in the patrol cars, but it's human nature to treat something harder if you don't own it or it's owned by the city or county. So most cops own their own flashlights even though the department provides a flashlight in the patrol unit.

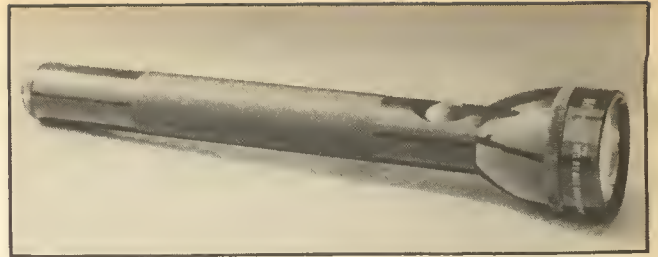
The first thing a rookie cop learned, after seeing his training officer's flashlight, was that there's more than one use for a bicycle inner tube. Placed over the barrel of the flashlight, it keeps the light from sliding out from under your arm, when held there. I once met a fellow officer who went one better in the inner tube trick. He first slid a section of muffler pipe over the barrel of the light before he added the inner tube. You have to remember this was before any of the new "aircraft aluminum" lights had hit the market and weaponless defense in police academies had not been raised to its present state. Back then you might have to hit a felon with whatever was in your hand without too much scientific skill.

At one time the only flashlight available was the old Eveready style. This had a large head and a shiny body and usually took four or five D-size batteries.

Then along came the super lights. As soon as one model hit the market, another company would claim their newest light was even better. The only difference between the two might be the position of a switch or number of batteries it held.

As a deputy working in a county jail, I had a first-hand introduction to the new halogen light when one of my fellow deputies tried to fuse my retina the first night he brought the light to work. You would have thought an entire troop of Jedi warriors had landed and they all had to test their light sabers.

If you think the deputies were excited, you should have seen the prisoners! They didn't know what to do now that we had a hand-held light that could illuminate a cell at night

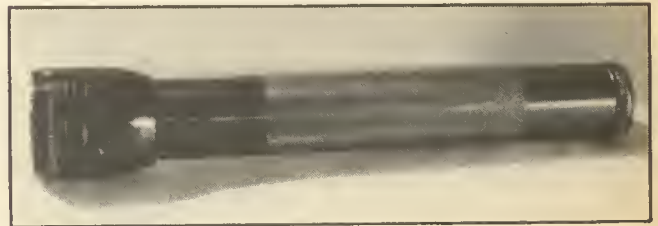


*The MAG-Lite is typical of the current crop of battery-powered police flashlights. They are universally used.*

like it was day. Eventually, they would hang a blanket off the end of a bunk to block out any light.

Deputies on patrol had to adjust their patrol procedures to accommodate the new bright lights. If a deputy tried to write a citation at night, using his new brighter light, he would lose his night vision for ten minutes or so. This may seem a small thing, but you have to understand that one moment you may have a traffic violator on your hands, the next you may have a gunfight in progress. With impaired night vision, you are in deep trouble. Eventually, we learned how to cut down the amount of light, using a hand or a corner of the patrol jacket. Later, several items came on the market to cure this problem.

*This is another MAG-Lite, one that uses the common D-cell. Light at the top of the page is a C-cell unit.*



*In the front seat of this patrol car, there is a flashlight mounted in its charging rack. This car also has a Taser gun, used to subdue unruly suspects.*





*This redoubtable old Streamlight was the first one the author purchased. It's rechargeable and quite BRIGHT. Newer models are more streamlined in their contours.*

The batteries in the rechargeable flashlight models were only good for about an hour, in some, an hour and a half. When they went down, they went down all at once and you had a dead flashlight in your hand. As noted, most officers own their own flashlights, even if the department provides lights. Thus, when the department light goes down, the officer can bring out his own flashlight.

Another problem with the brighter flashlights was what we call back scatter. This is especially true when one enters a warehouse or similar structure that has either light-colored walls or those of bare metal. The light bounces off the walls and lights up you and your partner. This can lead to serious consequences if you happen to be in the middle of a burglary in progress.

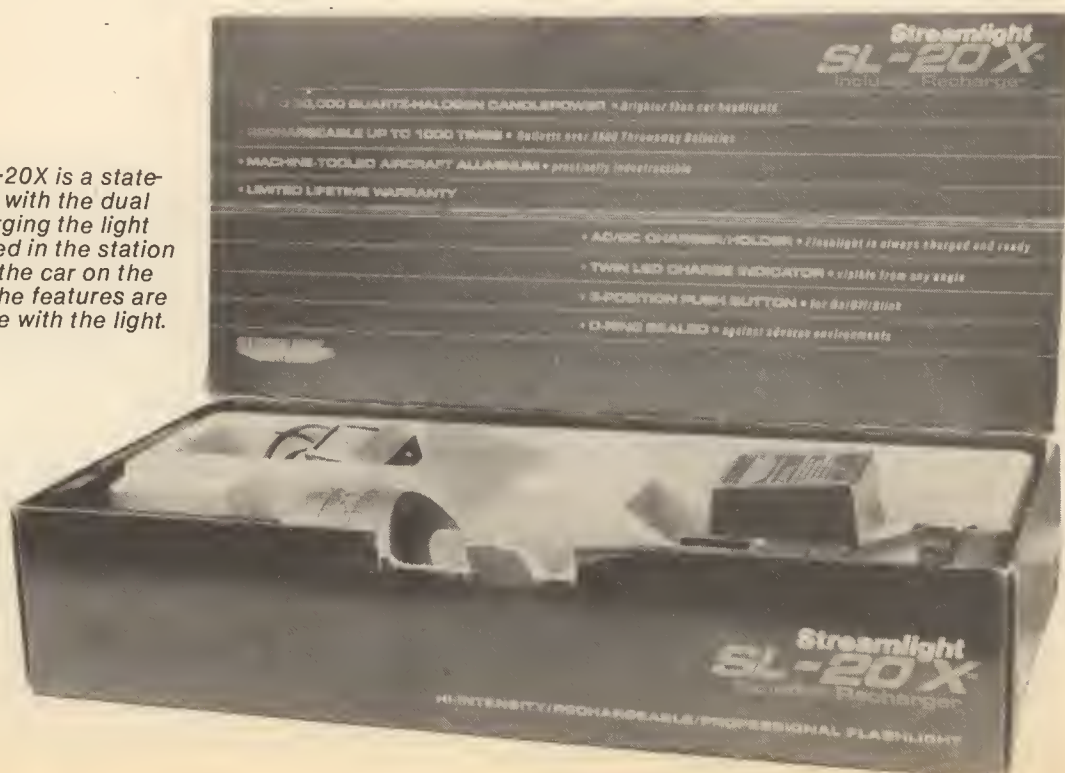
Flashlight use techniques eventually became a major subject in academies and training centers across the United States. Recruits now are taught to scan rooms with short bursts of light, changing position between bursts. Using this technique, if someone decides to shoot at the light or the officer, hopefully the felon won't find him in the area when he shoots.

Another feature of the light that was noted right away was weight. Made from "aircraft aluminum" — as compared to automobile aluminum, I suppose — the flashlights were touted as being industrial strength items. The first thing the patrolman noted was that his baton had been replaced, in part, by a flashlight. It was possible to have a flashlight in the left hand and not have to holster his weapon and draw a baton or vice versa. He could count on the flashlight to stand in for the baton. Some manufacturers did make a light actually meant to replace the baton. It used C-cell batteries instead of the Ds and held five or six batteries.

*Miniaturization is getting into the flashlight business. The Mini-MagLite usually works with AA batteries, but this unit was recently added — a rechargeable device.*



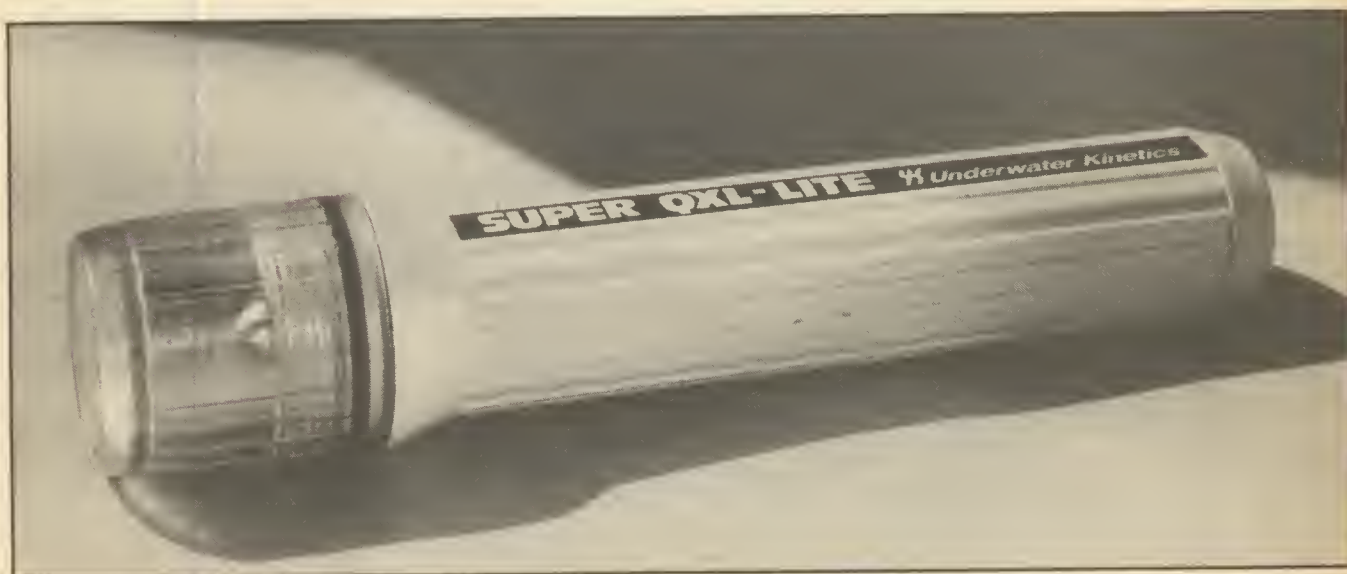
*The Streamlight SL-20X is a state-of-the-art flashlight with the dual AC or DC unit. Charging the light can be accomplished in the station or home or even in the car on the way to work. All of the features are standard; they come with the light.*







*This is the BEAM mount for a Streamlight, the one pictured on the first page of this chapter. The light is mounted on a Heckler & Koch MP-5 submachine gun, one of the best modern SMGs.*



*For a variety of reasons detailed in the text, this is the author's pet flashlight. Part of his reasoning is the fact that the barrel of the light is shaped to be held in the underarm position.*

This led to some consternation among the inmate population in our jail when the super lights first became popular. Since it was a new product, there were no rules and regulations concerning this flashlight. Several young depu-

ties purchased baton-size flashlights and promptly gained reputations for their willingness to reach out and touch someone. The first time this became an issue in a lawsuit, the administration took steps to limit the size of flashlights



*On these pages, we show a variety of the better lights made from plastic rather than the more expensive aircraft aluminum. Some of them are spin-offs from the SCUBA industry. This light is the Pelilite, a lightweight plastic flashlight well suited for plainclothes officers.*

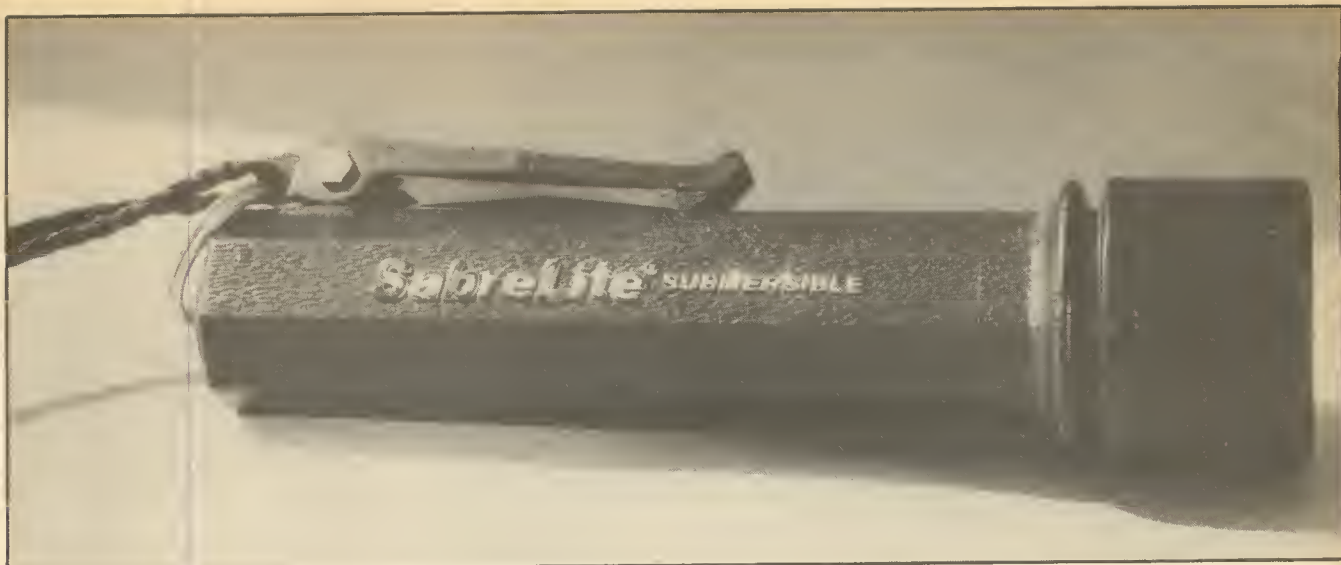


*The SwatLight has some significant advantages. First, it has a thumb-operated switch which allows it to be used one-handed. Second, it has two distinct light levels: one is a standard light and the other is a halogen high-intensity light. You get the best of two different lights.*

used in the jail. In fact, due to the zeal displayed in exhibiting the strength of aircraft aluminum, the lights no longer are carried in our jail. Instead, jailers carry plastic flashlights that are even tougher than the original aluminum. Deputies also can carry the new mini-style flashlight. So far, I haven't heard of anyone suing the department over a mini-light.

All of the problems and observations made thus far apply to the uniformed officer or deputy. It's a whole different world in undercover or plainclothes work; the flashlight becomes important in several ways. You may see television and movie detectives run through an entire film without ever using a flashlight, but it doesn't work that way in real life. In the course of his or her routine duties, every





*The SabreLite is submersible and has a clip that makes it a bit more versatile. The compact but brilliant light is well-suited to SWAT operations. One interesting attachment for the SabreLite is a wrist clip that holds the light so that it can be used in concert with a handgun.*

investigator sooner or later will need a flashlight. Most get by with their patrol light, hauling it around in a briefcase or the trunk of the car.

Some of us, however, depend on a flashlight by the very nature of our work. For instance, when I served warrants, most of my work was done at night when people were at home and contacted more easily. Unfortunately, this also

is the time when one may find himself chasing a suspect through the neighborhood's backyards.

We carried our flashlights with us and that's when I discovered the old trusty patrol light was a little too big to get in the back pocket of my Levi 501s. So began my life-long pursuit for the perfect flashlight.

When I worked in uniform, I noted the abrasive quality



*Certain situations require the use of a light on the gun. Laser Products makes these compact units to go on the .45 as shown, as well as on Beretta 92s, Brownings and SIG-Sauer 226s. The switch is on the side of the unit, sliding forward with the thumb of the non-shooting hand.*



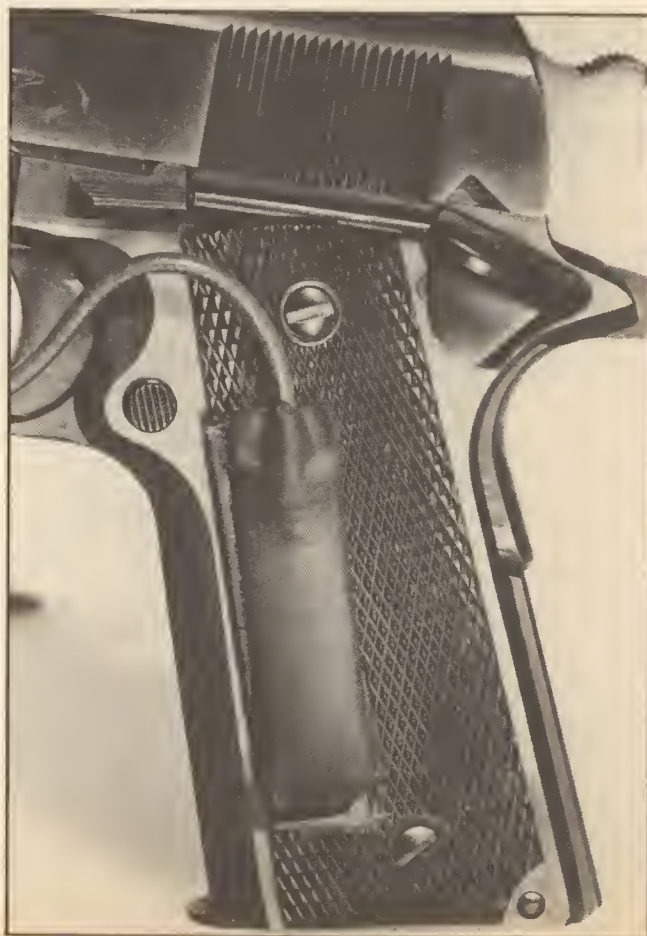
*Laser Products' Tac-Lites are also made for shotguns, like the Remington 870 in the above photo. The battery is a small lithium-type and the light is not as intense as that of the conventional flashlight. In the above gun, the light goes on when the tape switch built into the right side of the forend is pressed. On the Colt .45 in the lower photo, switch is mounted on the left grip. Turn it on with the right fingertips.*

of the knurling on the barrel of the flashlight. In the course of a year, the long pocket in my uniform trouser leg, where I carried my light, became frayed around the edge. Our department provides uniforms, but now that I was paying for civilian clothes for undercover work, I decided to find a better light. The first light I found that seemed to fit the bill was a diving light made by Underwater Kinetics, the Super "QXL" model. Made from one of the new Space Age plastics, the light has a unique series of ridges down its side. This affords a good grip even when it's wet, without the knurling to wear on the clothing. It uses three C-cell batteries and has the same type of halogen brilliance found in most of the new small lights.

The only drawback is it takes two hands to operate it. You have to twist the head of the light to make it work, although the maker insists the reason for this type of switch is its simplicity. In waterproof or diving lights, the less areas that water can penetrate the light, the better.

However, if you are a cop chasing a fugitive and you find yourself in a situation where you need your light, you may have to use your gun hand to operate the light. The only way I've found to overcome this problem is to place the barrel of the light in my right armpit and turn the light on with my left hand. I keep a light coat of grease on the threads and practice the movement so I can turn the light on and get it away from my body in one smooth movement. It's not ideal, but it's the best I could find to fit my needs.

I since have acquired several more lights that operate in the same fashion. One exception is the SWAT light by Pelican Products. This model has the unique combination of a low-level light and a high-intensity beam. It manages this by using two light filaments. It has a focusing beam







*The Tac-Lite is a compact and well made device. With either the tape switch on the grip or the spring-loaded switches on the light housing proper, the unit affords the user controllable light for most shooting distances.*

which allows a soft diffusing light for report writing and a focused spotlight on the high beam. To make it waterproof the manufacturer employs a magnetic switch.

Unfortunately the switch did not function correctly and the light was recalled for further work. In the meantime, there is a dimmer switch one can buy for the Streamlight that allows one to vary the intensity of the light. This allows you to write reports without blinding yourself.

During this time, the first of the mini lights appeared on the market. The first one I purchased was the Mini-Mag light by Mag Instrument. I was intrigued by its claim that it was the brightest light of its size on the market as well as

being waterproof to a depth greater than my swimming pool. That night I took it home and began my *scientific testing* by tying it to the line on my casting rod and running it up and down my pool from the shallow to the deep end.

I had to stop prematurely. One of my German shorthaired pointers nearly drowned himself trying to retrieve the light every time I'd cast it out. The other pointer just sat there with the regal air of a 10-year-old dog whose purpose in life is to find explosives on land and had no intention of joining UDT. When I checked the light, it didn't have any water inside.

The next test was conducted inside the house in a dark room. I found that, with a little practice, I could turn the light on and off with one hand. This solved the problem of having to use two hands. The light produced more than enough light to see whether the room was occupied. It also could be used by an investigator who needed light to check a crime scene. The smaller AA batteries were no problem since they were provided by the department. The only drawback I found was the necessity to focus the beam each time the light was activated.

There now are two small lights being introduced that address the problem of both focus and size. Each has an off-and-on switch as well as focusing beam. Both are powered by AAA batteries. There are many more flashlights being marketed, but the final option rests with the user; you may have to try a few before you find the perfect light. There will always be one more option and the search for the perfect light may never end. — *Christopher Weare*

*Roger Combs demonstrates the Tac-Lite on a Colt. He's seen using the tape switch on the grip, but could slip the thumb of his left hand up and slide the switch forward to on. When he releases it, the pressure of internal springs return the switch to the off position. The unit mounts to the gun in minutes.*







## CHAPTER NINETEEN

*Good Cops X Good Horses X Good Training  
Equals Multiplied Manpower or...*

# MOUNTED COPS





**M**AJOR CITIES throughout the nation have come to recognize the importance of the mounted police officer in a law enforcement role. New York City, with a population of 10 million and a 30,000-man police department, has 160 officers and 115 horses assigned to full-time mounted duty. Seattle, with 500,000 residents and a 100-man force, has four men and eight horses assigned. San Francisco, with a population of 750,000 and 2000 sworn officers, has a mounted patrol composed of twenty officers and thirty horses. The list goes on and on and, in all of the cities mentioned, the officers carry out mounted duties as their primary law enforcement assignment. In each instance, the horses are owned by the city and are supported and maintained by tax dollars.

Los Angeles, at the other extreme, has a force of fifty-eight horsemen, all of whom ride their own horses at this time. These officers are assigned to all types of units and are drawn from those assignments to mount up and ride, when the need arises. The officers draw an average of twenty-three cents a mile for hauling their horses to training twice monthly and to sites where they will carry out duty assignments. But the horse trailer, the truck to draw it, the saddle and tack involved belong to the individual. The items are purchased with his own funds. In addition to mileage, the only thing the city pays for is seven shoeings a year at the cost of \$65 per farrier visit. Since the horses require borium shoes that will not slip on concrete or similiar hard surfaces, the cost is higher than usual. If tack is damaged or an animal injured, either in training or service, the city also pays for repair or treatment.

When on duty, the officers ride their own saddles, but gain a uniform look with blue bridles, saddle pads and breast collars. Despite a range of horseflesh, from pintos to thoroughbreds with a rainbow assortment of colors, breeds and configurations in between, the look of uniformity and precision that makes this a force worthy of respect from wrongdoers is a result of rigid training.

The mounted unit is assigned today as an element of the Los Angeles Police Department's Metropolitan Division and has had an on-again, off-again history over the decades.

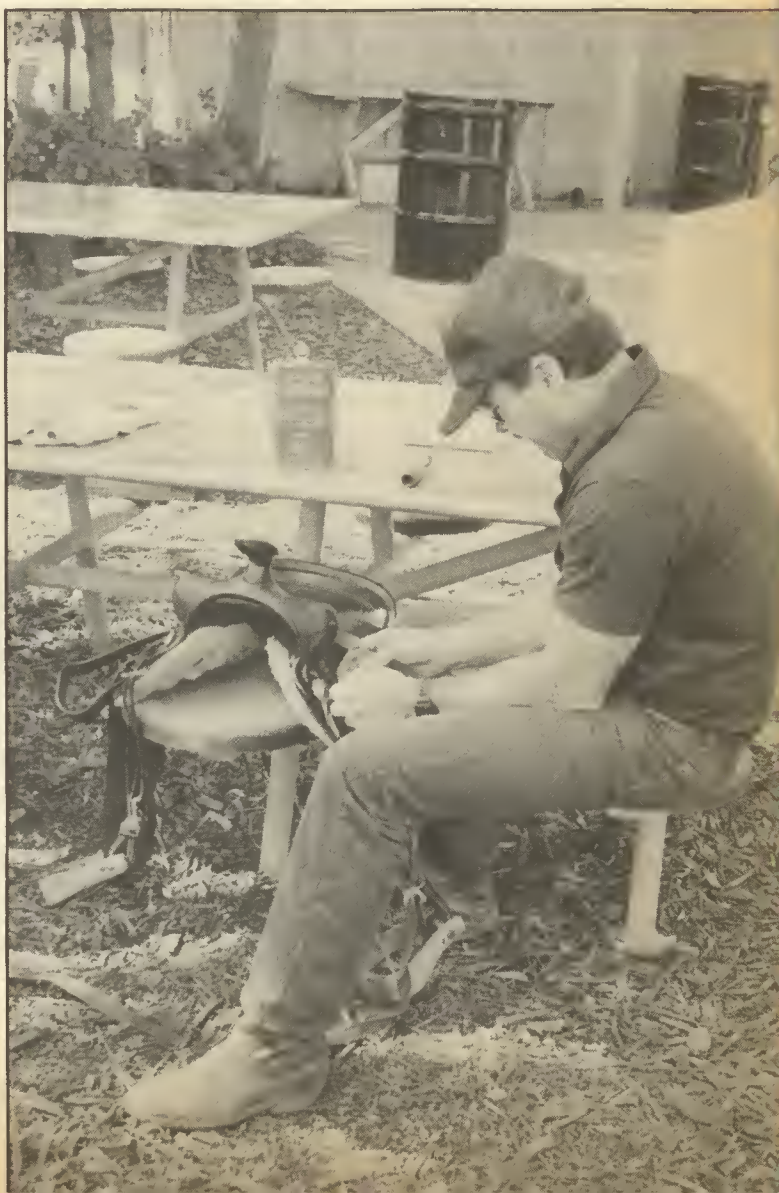
The first mounted unit was formed in 1911, then disbanded in 1926, the horsemen going back to foot-patrol status. A similar unit was resurrected in 1938, with a force of twenty-eight sworn officers, but it disappeared during World War II. That particular unit, according to records, was used mostly for overseeing marches, riding in parades and guarding the bridle trails of the city's vast Griffith Park.

*Police officers assigned to the mounted unit of the Los Angeles Police Department must furnish and care for their own saddles, other training equipment, including trailers.*

The current contingent was organized after Sergeant Gene Fretheim, working as the police chief's security aide, mentioned that horses were extremely effective in crowd control situations. He suggested a volunteer unit, saying, "It wouldn't cost the city anything, if the cops who own horses were willing to volunteer."

Chief Daryl Gates asked, "How many horses can you get together?"

Fretheim telephoned all LAPD divisions and had them announce the plan at roll call. Within three weeks, thirty-five officers had volunteered. The list was submitted in July 1980, and was followed by ten days of voluntary training. Luckily, a gent named Clyde Kennedy was a reserve police officer and his services were enlisted. Kennedy happens to be one of the best known horse trainers and horse show judges on the West Coast. He has been responsible for training many of the great movie horses that have been seen over the past three decades on television and in films.







*When members of the International Communist Party gather for a demonstration, mounted police officers are on hand to see that peace reigns. Only one officer faced this gathering.*

*Women officers (left) joined male counterparts to patrol the downtown streets of Los Angeles in a crime reduction effort that proved successful beyond official expectations.*





The first assignment was Hollywood's annual Santa Claus Lane Parade. In 1979, a riot had broken out at the intersection of Sunset and Bronson, when an unruly crowd charged the main float. Beat officers and patrol units had their hands full.

For the 1980 parade, eight mounted officers were assigned. Although unexpected, the crowd at Sunset and Bronson began the 1979 raid all over again. Twenty-five officers on foot and some twenty motor officers were losing it, the crowd out of control.

That was when the mounted officers arrived on the scene. In minutes, the crowd had dispersed and order prevailed. Only positive reports came in from the other officers on the scene. One declared that one mounted officer was equal to fifteen on foot. The volunteer unit still was strictly experimental at that time, but proved itself again when the police department was called out to handle a crowd that had been spurred to violence by the Ayatollah's workings.

"Horses seem to have a postive effect," Fretheim explains. "When you're standing in front of an officer on foot, you know that, if he strikes you, you've got a handy lawsuit to slap him with. But if you're in front of a horse, you never can tell what the animal will do and you can't really blame the rider." The horsemen kept the crowd separated and on the move through the day, reducing the chance of violence.

In a similiar riot-like confrontation, Steve Strong, one of the riders, collared a suspect who had hit a man in the mouth with a brick, knocking his teeth out.

"I was in the rear, tending my equipment, when the suspect ran by," Strong reported after the incident. "I pursued him for two or three blocks, staying about ten feet behind, until he tired and I could dismount and hold him." The suspect was charged with assault with a deadly weapon.

There were numerous other instances wherein the mounted patrol has been used to maintain the peace and disperse dangerous crowds. In May 1981, Chief Gates decided he wanted a mounted unit as permanent entity.

Today, the fifty-eight-man — and woman — unit is commanded by Lieutenant Dave Aikins as an additional duty. His primary duty is as commander of a platoon of the Metro Division. As before, mounted patrolmen are drawn from every other division in the department, ranging from detectives to motorcycle officers.

"In the beginning, we were a bit like our SWAT team," Aikins explains. "When that unit started, it was a bunch of people running around with .30/06 rifles. Today, the LAPD SWAT team is considered a model that other departments copy. Our initial training was hit-and-miss, but Clyde Kennedy was instrumental in focusing our efforts and bringing about a realistic training program."

Two days a month, the volunteer "horse soldiers," as they call themselves, gather in the foothills of the Angeles National Forest to train. The site is the Rose Bowl Riders arena, which is not even within the city limits of Los Angeles. Originally, a facility was installed in Griffith Park and training was conducted there for several years. Eventually, however, officials of the Parks and Recreation Department decided the training was too realistic for the tender eyes of park visitors. The unit was asked to move.

One member of the mounted unit also was a member of the Rose Bowl Riders and arranged for training at the site at a cost of only \$5 per officer per year. Ultimately, all of the mounted officers joined the club with full memberships, which they paid themselves.

The parks people may have had a point. Two Wednesdays of each month — weather permitting, and sometimes when it shouldn't — the officers trailer in their mounts,

*During demonstrations against the leadership of Iran and the hostage situation, mounted officers were on continuing patrol to see that the crowd did not turn into hostile mob.*







*Top: Members of the mounted unit begin their bi-weekly training with trail ride in Angeles National Forest. (Lower photo) Despite the variety of breeds and colors of horseflesh, the patrol trains to show precision.*

saddle up and start the training day with an hour-long trail ride into the Angeles National Forest. While this may sound recreational in nature, it has a purpose. It allows the horses to work out their kinks after lengthy trailering and it settles the more nervous animals.

Following an early lunch, training gets serious. The unit is broken into three training units. While Sergeant Fretheim teaches tactics in the arena, another element is going through a rigorous course that is meant to familiarize the horses with unusual circumstances. In reality, the course is an expanded competitive/trail riding set-up of the type used in horse shows.

In this, horses are taught to move through gates in such a manner that the rider can open and close them; they go over bridges, walk across teeter-totters, walk over old steer hides and learn to sidepass — walking sideways — across a series of plastic traffic cones.

“Possibly the greatest test is for a horse to walk across a piece of black plastic that’s laid out on the ground,” Fretheim says. “When a horse sees that black sheet, he is sure he is stepping into a bottomless hole. It takes some time.” The purpose, of course, is to educate the horse to go anywhere — and everywhere — that his rider needs to go.

Adding to the training — and often the excitement — is a sequence in which a police helicopter is flown in the area and hovers only a few feet over the arena, its rotor blades throwing dust over horse and riders. Motorcycle officers also are brought into the arena to weave around and through the horses, sirens blaring. In time, the animals learn to ignore all of these unusual circumstances. Since the mounted unit also patrols during the Chinese New Year, a huge paper dragon is brought into the ring and the horses are exposed to its bulk, with officers beneath the figure to carry it. At the same time, firecrackers are ignited virtually under



*Right: By putting horses in unusual surroundings and new circumstances, they learn not to panic. Riding across old pads teaches confidence. (Below) Horse's temperament can be put to the test when he is guided across low teeter board.*



*Using the same type of training as that for trail horses, animals are taught to cooperate in such efforts as opening and closing gate. This allows the rider to stay in saddle.*

*Horses also are taught to side-pass — or move sideways. In this instance, the horse is side-passing across a series of traffic cones. Even if they touch his belly, he moves on.*





*During training session, unit riders rehearse what they call the crossbow maneuver. A skirmish line may be threatened by crowds on flanks. When this happens, another squad passes through from rear, then moves to flanks to move the crowd.*

the horses' feet and flares are fired off. After a time, it becomes old hat and the horses seem bored by whatever it is these odd humans are doing.

Squad tactics receive a great deal of attention, including a maneuver called the crossbow. One squad, riding abreast, is the bow, its purpose to clear a street. Behind is another squad that rides in file, one horse behind the other. This is the arrow. At a designated moment, the bow comes to a halt — usually when the riders are threatened from the side — and, on signal, the arrow group rides through, then does a flanking movement to ride toward the threatening group. The arrow can go through the center of the skirmish line and split to move to each flank, or if there is more danger on one side, the entire squad may move in that direction. It has been found to be a simple but effective movement.

A recent introduction to equipment is the *bokan*, a martial arts device that is nothing more than a wooden replica of a Japanese samurai sword. This is carried in a ring on the saddle and is drawn upon signal from the squad leader in much the fashion that the cavalry troops of old drew their sabers. A good deal of drill is devoted to the use of the *bokan*, which is used primarily to keep rioters or other wrongdoers from grabbing the horse's bridle or getting close enough to injure the horse.

In the past, there have been horses injured in riot control efforts, usually by hurled bottles. "Usually, though, the crowd resents an effort to hurt a horse and may even turn on the culprit," one officer told me.

One story involves a big horse that was on duty during a major pro football game. The horse was standing at ease, relaxed with all of his weight resting on one side. A drunk apparently thought that, if he charged the horse in this off-balance stance, he could knock it over, perhaps pinning the

rider beneath. The drunk charged. At the same time, the horse shifted his weight. The culprit came up against a mass of horseflesh that resembled a brick wall and was knocked flat by the impact. The crowd turned on him and the individual ended up screaming for the law to save him from the incensed onlookers!

"When involved in crowd control, we attempt to look like a well oiled machine," Lieutenant Aikins states. "The military precision of the horses and riders is a deterrent in itself, we've found."

But in the past year, the mounted unit has been put to other tests. Mounted officers, usually working in pairs, have been used in crime suppression at such sites as the Los Angeles Colosseum during special events; in Westwood Village adjoining the University of California during student demonstrations or sporting events; even in shopping centers during the Christmas rush.

"Exposure tends to reduce crime," Lieutenant Aikins contends. "If a man is sitting on a horse, he is above the crowd; in a parking lot, he's above the cars. If a felon sees the officer looking around, he is sure the officer is looking right at him and he tends to move on. It works."

During the 1987 Los Angeles Marathon, there were more than 100,000 people in the Los Angeles Colosseum and the parking lot was full. With mounted officers patrolling the parking area, only two automobiles were burglarized. This is far below the norm.

The horsemen also have been used in controlling narcotics. The area of Fifth and Spring Streets in downtown Los Angeles was rife with dealers and dealing. Working with the narcotics squad, the two-man mounted teams were able to flush dealers into the waiting arms of narcotics officers on enough occasions that the dealers departed for



*Right: The bokan, a wooden replica of a samurai sword, is a martial arts device that is used primarily to protect the horse from a mob. (Below) The bokan is swung to discourage individuals from grabbing the bridle. Practice is necessary.*



*Sgt. Gene Fretheim, one of the founders of the mounted unit, offers bokan instruction to other members during bi-weekly training session. The maneuvers are performed by the numbers, with individual training for those who need added work.*





*Recruits from the Los Angeles Police Academy often are called upon to serve as rioters in practice sessions. This gives the mounted officers an opportunity to put the training on a practical basis.*

new territories. In one ninety-day period, more than seven hundred arrests were made in that particular area. Thirty-seven percent of them were accomplished by mounted patrolmen.

In spite of the fact that there are several former cowboys assigned to the mounted unit, "We work hard at seeing that we do not maintain a cowboy image," Aikens reports. "We want the unit to look like a professional law enforcement entity."

Nonetheless, there have been instances wherein cowboying abilities came in handy. On several occasions, culprits have been roped by lariat-swinging patrolman. One instance involved a man under the influence of PCP who went wild at a concert in Griffith Park.

"The man was absolutely insane," one participant recalls. "He came over, bit one of our horses, jumped on another officer and tried to pull his gun. The officer had to ride away. It took eight horsemen to control the man — four to corral him, two to hold horses and two more to wrestle the man down."

That was when the powers-that-be decided they needed ropers. Now, for major events, two ropers are included in each ten-horse squad. They were found effective in one incident in downtown Los Angeles. During a street fair there, an individual under the influence of drugs had pulled out a live electric cord and was swinging it about with sparks flying. He was roped and subdued. At a beach gathering, another individual was jumping up and down, caving in the roof of a car, when an officer roped him and dragged him to the sand to be subdued and handcuffed.

*The presence of mounted officers at gatherings tends to bring about a feeling of respect, experience has shown. In a number of actual confrontations, horsemen have proved their full value.*







*What once was a mobile drunk tank on the skidrow beat has been converted to use by the mounted unit. Called the Blue Mule, it carries hitch racks, feed, portable water trough. This allows officers to work mounts for longer hours, not having to return to an assembly point to refresh the horses.*

there also are Arabians, Morgans, Appaloosas and any number of crossbreeds. A couple of them look to be native mustangs taken from the wild horse herds of the West. Ages run from 3 to 18 years of age.

The blue gear that the officers use for their horses on duty was purchased originally for use during the 1984 Olympics with a special grant from the city. However, there was not enough money to maintain this equipment under rough use limited to duty tours. It has been replaced by donations from private individuals and horse-oriented groups.

Like other LAPD officers, the "horse soldiers" must undergo firearms qualifications with the duty weapon, but their pursuits have an added facet. After undergoing the same training as all other members of the department, they must fire from horseback.

In the first phase of the mounted marksmanship course, the officers start the training by standing outside the fence at the Police Academy's firing range, allowing the horses to become accustomed to the noise. Next, they go to a firing range located in a secluded canyon, riding through, firing blanks off the right, left and over the horse's heads. At the end of the canyon, the officer is required to dismount, fire six rounds, then reload while holding his horse. Then he fires another six rounds. Needless to say, the cartridges don't always slide easily into the chambers, when a frightened horse is jerking at the reins being held in one hand.

To deaden the blast and avoid possible ear damage to the horses, triangular sections of sponge are fitted into the

*'The Blue Mule'*



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Then there's the Blue Mule. This is a police van that once was used as a rolling drunk tank. One of the unit's officers — a qualified mechanic — put the van in good working order and outfitted it with hitching rings, room for feed storage and a portable watering trough. Thus, the Blue Mule eliminates the need to return to a staging area to feed and water horses during duty breaks.

When the unit was being formed, one police official — knowing little of horses — suggested that he would like to see nothing but "blacks and bays" on the street. In a situation such as New York City, where the city buys and maintains the horses, this is possible. However, as one rider put it, "If we'd had to live up to that desire, we'd have ended up with a six-horse unit."

While the majority of the animals are quarter horses,



*Bridles, breast collars, saddle pads and saddle bags are of standard blue color. This tends to afford the horse a look of uniformity in spite of the varying colors and breeds. All of the horses, of course, are privately owned by officers.*

horses' ears; an old trick derived from Western movie-making techniques.

The live-fire sequence consists of approaching a silhouette target at a trot, halting the horse, then firing two rounds at the target. The horse then is put at the trot once more, going to the next target, where it is halted and the silhouette fired upon; the sequence continues. This follows much the same technique of the old cavalry, except that military horsemen fired the course at full gallop.

"We teach first-shot accuracy," one training officer explained, "because there is no way of knowing where the second shot will go. A horse may react differently every time someone shoots from his back in spite of our training efforts."

The only person assigned on a full-time basis is John Aitken, a longtime officer, who works closely with the unit

commander. He is responsible for arranging training schedules and seeing that personnel are relieved from primary duties when needed for a parade or a confrontation. He coordinates with all of the other divisions in the department to ensure that personnel will be available for mounted duty. Without going into detail, let it be said that stripping a division of its personnel for special horseback duties can offer problems that require diplomacy.

At this writing, a request has been submitted to make the mounted unit a full-time segment of the Metro Division. Such a unit was recommended several years ago by the Los Angeles County Grand Jury. Approval of the plan would mean that thirty-two officers and forty city-purchased horses would make up the unit.

The officer who made the original suggestion may yet get those black and bay horses. — *Jack Lewis.*





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